



NOW THEN.

MARTIN F BEDFORD. TUNNG. THE BRITISH PEOPLE.
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EDITORIAL.

We’ve got a real mixed bag of opinions and banter this month - subjects covered include Sheffield architecture, anarchism, the demolition of Park Hill, election spiel, professional blog writing and e-bituaries. We’ve got a folkstastic pair of music interviews in the form of Tunng and Big Eyes Family Players as well, on top of an opinion piece on the evolution of taste.

Don’t worry, you haven’t been shot and woken up in 1980, you aren’t driving round in a classy Audi (more’s the pity.) This month’s art is by local gent Martin Bedford. Martin has been producing gig posters for musicians from Sheffield and beyond since the early 80s and for just about anyone worth knowing, so don’t be too confused by all the out-of-date flyers inside.

Send articles, ideas and rants to subs@nowthenmagazine.com

SAM.

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LOCALCHECK:

ANARCHISM IN SHEFFIELD.

HOSTED BY ALT-SHEFF.

THIS MONTH WE'D LIKE TO GIVE A BIG MENTION TO ANARCHISM. BOOKED FOR 22ND MAY IN OUR OWN LOVELY CITY IS SHEFFIELD'S FIRST EVER ANARCHIST BOOK FAIR. IF YOU'RE ANARCHO-CURIOUS COME AND MEET SOME LOCAL ANARCHISTS. THE GREENS HAVE CONFERENCES, THE LEFT HAVE MEETINGS, THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE TEA PARTIES. SO WHAT DO ANARCHISTS HAVE? BOOK FAIRS?!

These events have run for years in cities from San Francisco to Zagreb. They're a great starting point into the ideas, activism, ethics, creativity and history of the contemporary anarchist scene, with publishers, comix, zines, film, art, food and fun stuff. It's at Corporation, appropriately painted black for the event, no doubt with a buzzing after-party nearby. And if you can't wait till then, from 12-15th May 2010 expect to see a Temporary Autonomous Arts exhibition popping up, a free exhibition space in a disused building. Bring some of your own art!

We've just been allowed our once-in-a-blue-moon poke at democracy. X marks the spot? It didn't even come close. Can we really choose the government? Many people are asking why the ballot paper doesn't include 'none of the above'. The state may claim to control the universe, but in fact life would (and does) continue without it. Isn't the way you run your house or your social life a kind of small scale democracy? So you are a practising anarchist. These people are your 'affinity group'.

Anarchism comes in a lot of different flavours. They're all devoted to self-help, mutual non-hierarchical working. In fact, anarchist activists have been running through campaigns like the anti-war movement for years, not to mention charging through fox hunts and sautéing through the most innovative vegan cuisine. They've led the way in struggles against slavery and fascism, and for the acceptance of feminism and gay, bisexual and transgender rights, not to mention labour movements.

They're just as anti-capitalist as socialists, but the early anarchists warned big daddy Marx that his version could go all dictatorial before you could say Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. After a huge fall-out in 1872 the two sister-movements haven't spoken to each other much since. C'mon guys!

Anarchist communities around the world are sticking a finger up to the existing order. There's the Zapatistas, who are running a large area of Mexico, and the 100,000 in Spain's CGT (Confederación General del Trabajo). Christiania, Copenhagen's hippy squatter area, has operated independently of the Danish government since 1971. It has radio and TV stations, a bakery, blacksmith, bike shop, carpenters, cafés, restaurants, jazz and blues venues and nightclubs, galleries...Oh, and an internationally acclaimed theatre. And the population runs everything by consensus decision-making - for example, allowing cannabis.

And here in Britain we've got a lot of cooperatives run on anarchist lines, and there's a growing interest in what they're doing right. Many of them will be at the book fair. Also check out the latest offering from Sheffield's anarchist film collective Cinema Syndicate. They show weekly free films. All welcome.

For these and alternative events of all kinds in Sheffield, keep an eye on our own dear website Alt-Sheff. It's going to be an exciting summer.

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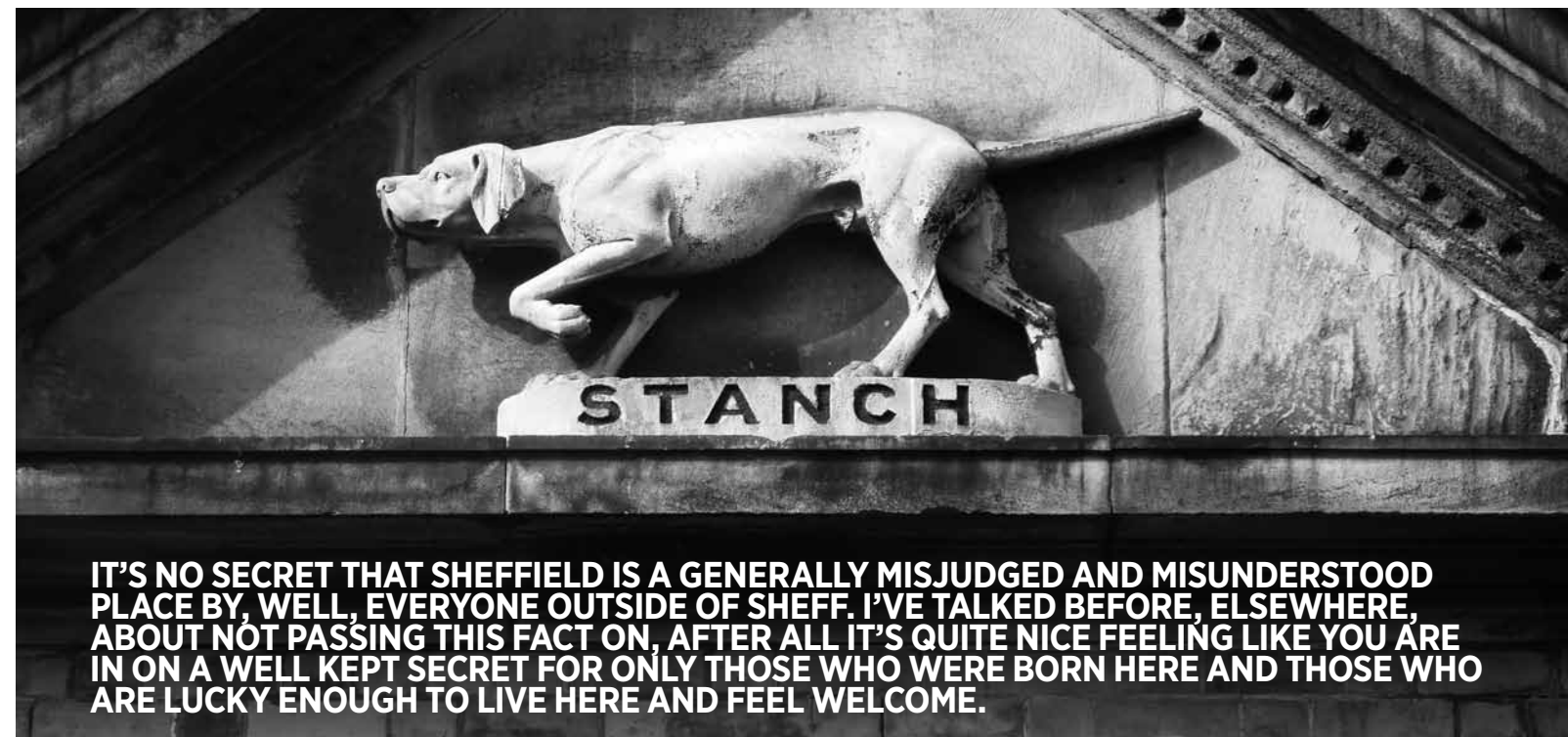
29th : Soul Circle Gang

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SECRET SHEFFIELD.

THIS IS THE PART OF SHEFFIELD I LOVE.

CLARE MACKENZIE.



IT'S NO SECRET THAT SHEFFIELD IS A GENERALLY MISJUDGED AND MISUNDERSTOOD PLACE BY, WELL, EVERYONE OUTSIDE OF SHEFF. I'VE TALKED BEFORE, ELSEWHERE, ABOUT NOT PASSING THIS FACT ON, AFTER ALL IT'S QUITE NICE FEELING LIKE YOU ARE IN ON A WELL KEPT SECRET FOR ONLY THOSE WHO WERE BORN HERE AND THOSE WHO ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO LIVE HERE AND FEEL WELCOME.

But for artisans and those in the know, there is so much more to Sheff than meets the eye. Scratch the surface and all these little bug-like gems come crawling out, enticing you with sweet Bambi-like eyes and occasionally giving you a playful nip.

Well imagine my surprise when upon chasing the story of Stanch the Bloodhound through a slap of fate from brazen lady coincidence, I stumbled upon something much more - a story that involves a faithful friend, Laurel & Hardy, import and export (not the dodgy kind), fire, flood, the paranormal and a Goods Inwards Manager called Paul.

It starts at I.Grunwerg Ltd, who decades ago moved into the prior premises of J Riley Carr Ltd. It's true that art is found in unusual places and for the staff of I.Grunwerg who trundle into work every day busying themselves with the important task of importing and exporting kitchenware, this is never truer. When I walked into their industrious reception, the ladies there were rather surprised by my unusual request about Stanch the Bloodhound, who nowadays stands guard on their car park from his parapet on a disused part of their building. They may just have been thrown by me, as the coat I was wearing at the time made me look like an extra from Allo Allo.

"You wha?" Was mainly the reply in deedar, "you seen this ere Bloodhound this lady's talkin' 'bout?"

"you wha?"

"Sorry love, we normally walk up tut road, not dahn".

I momentarily felt scuppered, but then the quiet voice of a man (whom I'd guessed was not normally in the habit of interrupting the office ladies) kindly informed me that Paul had researched it, and he was summoned to help me. I perked up. Whilst waiting, in my usual investigative (sic nosy) manner, I turned to inspect my surroundings and discovered a framed poster depicting Laurel & Hardy.

Within the frame was a letter dated 31st December 1932 from one Stan Laurel, a one dollar bill and an extremely browned advert. The letter, if you'll excuse me paraphrasing dreadfully, basically says, "No, I'm not taking the piss, I have had the best shave ever using your 'Laurel' blades. Please send me as many blades as a one dollar bill will get me. Signed very truly yours, Stan Laurel."

I asked if I could take a picture and then Paul led me outside to tell me as much as he could about Stanch. Stanch comes from Olde English and a hint of French, meaning Staunch and the literal meaning doesn't take a genius to figure out. It was J Riley's dog. Mr Riley (who I believe from research was actually Mr Carr), owned most of the buildings on Bailey Lane. The one Stanch safeguards from used to be back to back housing. I have picked up threads on the internet that these houses were affected by the Sheffield flood and fire on different occasions.

Mr Riley had the statue of his faithful friend erected upon the dog's death and there he poses today in the characteristic stance of any good hunting dog. Paul, the Goods Inwards Manager, told me he took some pictures inside the building, which is currently uninhabitable and full of buckets catching drips. Once, when they were testing a 'flame' effect for an exhibition, he took a picture that he says clearly shows a woman's face. Having an interest in the paranormal he took it upon himself to do his own investigations to see if anything had 'happened' there, which is how he has come to know some of the history.

Apparently, the landlady of the Dog & Partridge on Trippets Lane remembers a fire that occurred when she moved from Ireland some 30 odd years ago, including a fatality. She could not remember whether this was a male or female.

This is the part of Sheffield I love, and something I think even Sheffielders miss in the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives - these little secrets, stories and threads of whispers that lead to other amazing discoveries that people who see them everyday have stopped seeing. I urge everyone, every once in a while, to stop, look up, look side to side or within your own surroundings. You never know what you are missing.





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PARK HILL.

NOT IN YOUR BACKYARD

EEX.

I did not grow up within the city limits but Sheffield has always been the big city in my life, and my memory of urban existence in the Sheffield of the 1970s was mostly of dark underpasses, concrete bridges and the stink of cigarette smoke.

I was recently at a meeting where a group of middle-class academics were waxing lyrical about the preservation of Park Hill, but I was the only person in the room who had actually lived there. Park Hill is a travesty that was inspired by the noblest of minds but implemented by the shallowest of pockets. Le Corbusier (1887-1965) imagined an elegant vision of idealized communities living in the sky, but his plans included all the amenities of society on every deck. In Park Hill you had to walk a third of a mile to the nearest shop, and when you got there it was some dismal hillbilly Spar that sold nothing but Slimcea, Silk Cut and Tennant's Super. You could ride in an elevator with no windows if you didn't mind breathing in the piss of strangers. Maybe that was ok for me or the trendy artists and students indulging themselves in the conceit of brutalist aesthetics, but not for the old, the infirm or the vulnerable. I've been assaulted 3 times in my life and 2 of those occasions were in Park Hill.

It's hard to avoid the mawkish obsession of Grenville Squires, one of the ex-caretakers of Park Hill, as he is quoted over and over again in documentaries referring to the dismal flat blocks as an old lady who needs a facelift. More like a crack whore who needs a breast reduction.

And now it's being re-developed. You need only watch the promotional video that Urban Splash has commissioned for the new, cleaner, greener, trendier Park Hill to see that it is not being redeveloped for the people that were moved out, but for young, good-looking singles and nuclear families with disposable income and no embarrassing disabilities. I wonder which new sink estate they have been moved on to.

Apart from Squires, the people who campaigned for the preservation of the Tinsley cooling towers are not the local people who grew up in their shadow, but students, academics and middle-class incomers who either did not live here then, or else are well-off enough to not have to travel on buses via the (fortunately now gone) deeply depressing Pond Street bus station.

The same whingers that wanted to preserve the cooling towers would have been the first to complain if a single penny of its upkeep came out of their Council Tax or in any way prevented them from buying their organic penne from Waitrose. So who would pay for it? It might be better to fill in the increasing number of potholes in Sheffield's crumbling roads before throwing the cash into a post-industrial money pit. And for what? To commemorate an industrial past that killed and crippled its workers with emphysema, vibration white-finger and deafness? It's very easy to see the past as rosy if you weren't there. I didn't work in the steel mills or the coal mines but I grew up in this area in the 1970s and I don't want to go back.

The same people are objecting to the Sevenstone redevelopment of the city centre, but they have not brains enough to understand that commerce is the key to urban regeneration, not the burden of preservation. It matters not whether you want to buy your sweat-shop-manufactured clothes from John Lewis, Primark or TK Maxx, because more business is good for everyone and the smaller, independent and high-quality businesses will gain from the fall-out of a greater foot-fall through the city, even if it is provided by fat corporate thugs demonstrating their weekend-only individuality by buying injection-moulded, plastic-fantastic Nikes at £150 a shot.

I would burn Park Hill to the ground myself if I had the chance. I'd like to press the big red detonation button and collapse its endless, confusing and identical concrete causeways. I'd poke out the jaunty Liquorice Allsorts that they've shoved into the structure, melt them down and re-cast them into the Lego bricks they were made from. Preservation for its own sake is the privilege of the rich and the listing of such an eyesore is the conceit of English Heritage, who are very nicely accommodated in a townhouse in York. It's easy to dictate your taste to others when you are not the ones who have to live within sight of its smug ugliness.

Heritage, history and posterity are important but this sentimentality is misguided. We should record it, photograph it, document it, and then raze Park Hill to the ground. What goes around comes around and what goes up must come down.

edwardellison.wordpress.com

PHOTO - BENEDICT EVANS.

THIS MONTH WE'RE FEATURING A PROSE SUBMISSIONS FROM AN EXCELLENT LOCAL AUTHOR. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME WE'VE PUBLISHED SAM PRIESTLEY, WHOSE FIRST BOOK 'DESPITE LOSING IT ON FINKLE STREET' IS OUT NOW.

Please send all poetry (up to 40 lines) and prose (up to 1,200 words) to subs@nowthenmagazine.com

Know of any poetry or literary events happening in Sheffield in June? Send over a few details and we'll put out the information below.

WORD LIFE/ROUTE 57 POETRY EVENT.

12th May, 6pm, Free Entry.
Richard Roberts Building, Sheffield University.

Featuring Joe Kriss, Kayo Chingonyi and published poets from the University of Sheffield's creative writing e-zine, Route 57. For more information visit opusindependents.com

THE OLD TOWN - BLACK TATTOO.

Selena has new shoes. She slips them on in the car when Carl stops driving, changing from her old, scuffed trainers to her new black leather mules with caramel stitching. Soft as a sigh. Half price in the end of season sale. She unfastens her seatbelt and leans forward to touch them. They feel like the leaf of a large tropical plant.

Beside her Selena's new, un-broken boyfriend Carl, tightens the hand-break and checks himself in the rear view mirror. He picks at the crown of his head to fluff up his hair like a chimp, then looks at the hotel that leans on the side of the road. 'Is this it?' he asks.

The hotel is a middle terrace. A board sways on the wall by the door displaying three pale stars. Selena re-reads the details in her lap. 'Yep,' she says and points up the street where a curve in the road spoons the pavement. 'But we have to park up there at the top.'

Carl frees the hand-break and the car creeps on, to the dead end, where a tall house allows them to turn in its horseshoe drive before the car curls into a space by the curb.

Selena can't look. This is the house. It's no coincidence. She knew where this house was, made sure before booking the hotel. She found out through a network of internet rumours and chat room ramblings. It swamps her senses for a moment, but she can't bend her eyes on the three-story house at the top of the street for long. She can't hold the gaze of the glass in the windows or follow the texture of the bricks. She looks down at her shoes instead and notices for the first time how the fawn brown stitching along the toes is arranged in perfect little crosses.

She bought these shoes yesterday, and then she slipped them into Carl's car as she sat down, and they drove 100 miles to get here. A night away. A dirty weekend, or so everybody kept saying.

Men in the pub on Friday night nudging Carl. *You old devil. You dirty dogs.* Girls at work in the office gasping at Selena. *We know what you'll be up to.* But they didn't. Nobody knew what Selena was up to.

They have hung clothes in the old fusty wardrobe in their room and set toiletries around the scale-scarred taps in the en-suite. It feels strange to be with him like this. Hardly knows him. Selena's only been seeing Carl for two weeks and yet here she is looking at his razor beside the teas maid and wondering if he takes sugar in his coffee.

'Are you ready?' he asks, buttoning his shirt by the door.

Selena looks at the razor again. He's used it, shook the tiny powder-like hairs onto the dresser by the kettle and cups, and left them there. She takes a deep breath and turns away. She can ignore all these little things about a man. Eating with their mouths open, smelly socks, stale sweat, beer breath. Every woman has to. Except maybe one or two, she thinks. There are some women who have a man who is *different*. Above the rest. And that was the man Selena would snare.

'Yeah,' she answers. 'I'm ready.'

They eat in an old restaurant with lopsided walls and black wood beams.

The waitress brings their drinks, filling the small table with blue gin and miniature bottles of tonic, the house red, and mineral water from the hills above Buxton.

They eat and drink and then leave the restaurant. Selena stops at the door and fidgets her feet in her shoes. She leans on Carl while she pulls at the back of the leather around her ankles. As she looks up, bent to the floor where her shoes strangle her feet, she sees a girl standing, waiting. Jeans begin low on her hips beneath a buckle belt. Above it, perfect brown skin at the small of her back. Black tattoo. She's waiting for someone. She knows he isn't coming. Selena wants to tell her to ditch whoever has stood her up. He can't be worth it. Selena doesn't believe in settling for anything less than perfect. It would mean years of never coming up to scratch. Decades, if they made it that far, of falling short of the dream and struggling to compensate for their overwhelming disappointment. Selena has vowed only to marry the special person. She will stalk him and catch him and only then could she be happy.

The gin was sharp. A kitchen knife sliced on Selena's tongue. A taste like the smell of chopped grass. She downed it with the red wine, the Buxton water sipped every so often. Now, outside, heading for a pub, her brain sways in her skull.

Selena and Carl enter at a narrow bar. Music is butting Selena's head. Carl shouts at the girl behind the bar, *whiskey!* He's becoming different as the night goes on. More open. Relaxed. More adventurous. Selena pockets a note in her brain. She would like this about Carl, if her mind wasn't so busy with someone else.

Selena swipes her eyes over all the people, but can't see the one she's looking for. The one from the house at the top of the street. If he was here now, she'd know. Her body would tell her. The hairs on her arms would whisper to her skin and her shoulders would react. Her legs, her feet, the curve of her hands would pick up on his presence. She would know without having to see him. And she can feel nothing, only Carl's hand, the big bulk of his body as he pulls her close and whispers words in her ear.

This is blank next to Selena's love. This has nothing to do with her heart. She coaxes Carl to another pub, and then another, elongating the night and her search for the special person, the perfect one.

She's using Carl but, she insists, he's quite happy about that. He's a man. And, unlike a woman, he doesn't kiss with his heart in his mouth.

At the fizzled out end of the night, back outside the hotel, Selena stops walking and stares into the dark, past the stacked terraced fronts, windows and doors. At the top of this street there is a house waiting. Selena can just make it out through the black air and the fuzz of alcohol. The kitchen door is open, a light on. There's a car parked outside with a soft-top and a symbol of Wales, the dragon, down by the number plate. It closes the deal. The dragon confirms what Selena already knew. *He* lives here. The perfect one.

Selena walks slowly towards the house, leaving Carl with his hands held open like he's inviting applause, thinking she's drunk, wondering whether to grab her and pull her back, thinking *stupid cow*.

'Selena! You can't just...'

But she ignores him, stumbles up to the top of the street and stops outside the big house. She takes a step forward. The kitchen light is on. She can see the worktops inside, the cooker, the fridge, things he's touched. She takes a few more steps and she's in the doorway. Next she will be inside and she'll be able to actually feel him.

'Selena!'

Carl is behind her, his hand holding her arm tight as a frown. He's pulling her back. 'What do you think you're doing?' he asks. 'Come away.'

But it's too late for Carl to hang onto any normality. A girl is beside them now. She's stopped on the back step next to Carl and Selena and is staring at their faces. Carl mutters *sorry* to her and shakes his head. A conspirator's look is clamped between Carl and the girl as he pulls Selena away. It makes Selena shrivel. This isn't how it's supposed to be. It's not how Carl should be acting. He did all the running, almost begged Selena to go out with him. When she suggested the weekend away he'd bitten quickly, snatched her hand off. He's supposed to be a walk-over.

The girl glances at Selena once and then carries on into the house, shouting something up the stairs. Something about the time and how long she'd been waiting alone. Waiting for *him*. In the light from the kitchen, Selena sees the curved tattoo on the girl's back shrug as she walks.

Selena's insides slump in her body. She has chased this man for a hundred miles. Bought new shoes. She has suffered Carl in order to be here. This is everything.

Though she's never spoken to this man, never held his hand, never caught his eye, she knows every detail of his face, every expression he's capable of making, every tone and pitch his voice can achieve. She should, she's watched him for hour after hour often enough. She's run her video back fifty times to catch his body in a certain lean again. Held it, freeze frame, to devour the lines on his face and the shape of his eyes, and make believe they were looking at her. When he performed on radio, she taped that too and played it in the kitchen and then made his voice spell out different words in her head and bent them into what she wanted them to say. She has loved him. And she doesn't even care that he is reduced to a three-man play in the run down old theatre in this small town. She tells herself, she still loves him. And next time she'll get him.

SAM PRIESTLEY.





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THE BRITISH PEOPLE.

RHETORIC AND APOLOGY.

ANDY REES.

I DON'T KNOW IF ANYONE ELSE HAS NOTICED THIS, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE A SUDDEN SHIFT IN POLITICAL RHETORIC SINCE THE GENERAL ELECTION CIRCUS STARTED SENDING IN THE CLOWNS. HARDLY A SPEECH GOES BY, HARDLY A SWEATY 'REAL' HANDSHAKE OR TIE-LESS HUG OCCURS WITHOUT MENTION OF 'THE BRITISH PEOPLE'.

'Gord', 'Dave', 'El Clegg', and their assortment of rent-a-ministers, are obsessed. Type it in on Google and go wild. 'The British People' this, 'The British People' that. It's 'The British People's' choice, it's their vote. It's weird, but it's not entirely unsurprising.

First off, the political establishment knows that they are the most hated group in the UK right now, closely followed by paediatricians and 'Foriners'. This comes out of ExpensesGate, but also from the growing feeling that politicians are not-to-be-trusted, money-driven sleazeballs who would sell their own children for a shot at a ministerial position. They know 'The British People' hate them.

How can they rescue themselves? The answer of course, is a very human one – kiss ass and get back in favour. Bend over backwards, do a little dance, look longingly into our eyes and sob that they'll never let us down again, choking back tears. Right.

So they need 'The British People' on their side, to vote for them. What better way to do this than to empower them with rhetoric and apology? 'The British People' are told that they are the most rational, calm, kind, sensible, level-headed, just and 'well fucking sound' bunch since, well, since whenever.

Couple this with the expectation that people want to feel informed and powerful when it comes to Big Politics that has come from 24-hour News and Le Petit Internet, and you have an all round love-in whereby the political establishment wants to convince the voters that they, 'The British People', are just swell, and they would love to meet you all and have a chat about cats, or immigrants, or litter, or whatever's on your mind really, mate, buddy, love.

All this makes us, the (non)voting public, feel that we possess the virtues, as an individual, that 'The British People' are labeled with by politicians. So when Dave says that 'The British People must be trusted to decide', Johnny and Jane British think 'Oh, I'm trustworthy, that's what I am', and it gives them a sense of empowerment and self-respect. These feelings are an illusion, but it makes people feel involved and listened to. It sneakily restores voter confidence in the system. Easy.

So, the increased use of the phrase 'The British People' is supposed to re-endorse everyone to the system and to the individual parties that want your votes. It makes us feel needed, clever, intelligent and just.

But does this bear up to scrutiny? Are 'The British People' this collective of conscientious, rational individuals that come together in times of crisis, like in t'war? The answer has to be a rather obvious 'No'.

The evidence is grimly overwhelming. Now don't get me wrong – I have an infinite amount of time for everyone as an individual, but you have to admit that collectively we are a bit shit. I don't need to catalogue the list of reasons why people do not exist as rational, autonomous beings that make logical choices based on all the available evidence. That is a myth spread by people who want us to believe that we are all these things, so that they can sell us ideas, products and realities that rely on the irrational, selfish and fearful aspects of ourselves that they seek to deny. By convincing us we are rational, they can sell us things irrationally and we don't even notice. By convincing us newspapers tell us the truth because we are worthy of the truth, we believe everything we read. By telling us we make informed consumer choices, we buy impulsively and think we're Johnny Fucking Clever Clogs for not falling for their marketing.

The same goes for political ideas. We are told we can make informed choices, so we feel empowered to make a choice which is far from informed. We are told that we, 'The British People', can make up our own minds, so we should vote for the party we think best represents us nationally and internationally. Absolute bollocks. We vote with our judgments, our wallets, our insecurities and most importantly to protect our own perceived best interests. Thus it has been and always will be. The sooner we realise this and learn to live with it, the better we will all be and the more chance this shoddy 'democracy' has of making people feel good about life.

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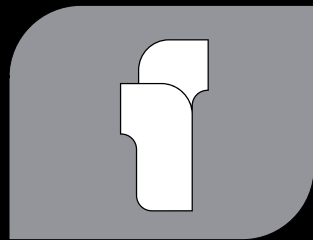
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HELLO, MY NAME IS SCOTT AND I HAVE BEEN WRITING A BLOG FOR JUST OVER EIGHT YEARS. IT IS A GREAT BLOG AND CONTAINS THE WITTIEST STUFF ON THE INTERNET. I HAVE HAD OVER FIVE HITS ON MY BLOG DURING THE TIME IT HAS BEEN RUNNING AND NOT ALL OF THOSE HAVE BEEN PEOPLE I ASKED TO GO THERE.

As a professional blog writer of the wittiest stuff on the internet, I recently decided to quit my job as head assistant chef in charge of pickles at McDonalds and focus full time on my writing career. Due to my unique creative spark and rapier sharp wit, my blog has had unprecedented success and just this week I had another hit. Apparently they mistyped 'rim dent' in Google but it still counts. Being a professional blog writer is not all Moët and chicken nuggets though - due to server and hosting fees, I made minus \$490 last financial year but my wife works three jobs and has a credit card so it all balances out.

If I had friends they would often ask me, "Scott, what is the secret behind your champagne quality comedy?" and I would explain to them that it is just a gift and that some people are naturally born with an incredible creative spark while others just get to read it. Recently, I wrote about the time a bee flew in my car window and then flew back out. It was so funny and when I posted a link to it on World of Warcraft a level 54 dwarf wrote back saying "awesome man", which made my day.

Once when I was online in my dwarf clan, I met a level 41 dwarf named Cindy and we fell in love despite her being below my status. I would send her poetry about Warcraft and she would edit it for me. As my wife works a hundred and eighty hour week, this gave me plenty of opportunity to organise a liaison with Cindy in real life. After arranging to meet, I packed my dwarf costume and battle axe and used my wife's credit card to buy a bus ticket to the town Cindy lived in. As it turned out, Cindy was actually a real dwarf. And a man. We still made love so as not to waste the money I had spent but I left feeling deceived and only partly satisfied. Why can't people just be honest?

Because I am a professional blog writer, I recently upgraded my Amstrad CPC 464 to an appropriate system befitting my role. Using my wife's credit card, I purchased fifteen mainframe computer systems but have ordered an additional twenty five computers as no matter how full my hard drives become, people keep putting new porn on the internet. I have no idea how they expect me to keep up. I feel like Captain Picard commanding the Enterprise when I work and sometimes I wear my Star Trek uniform when my wife is out. My favourite character from Star Trek is Wesley.

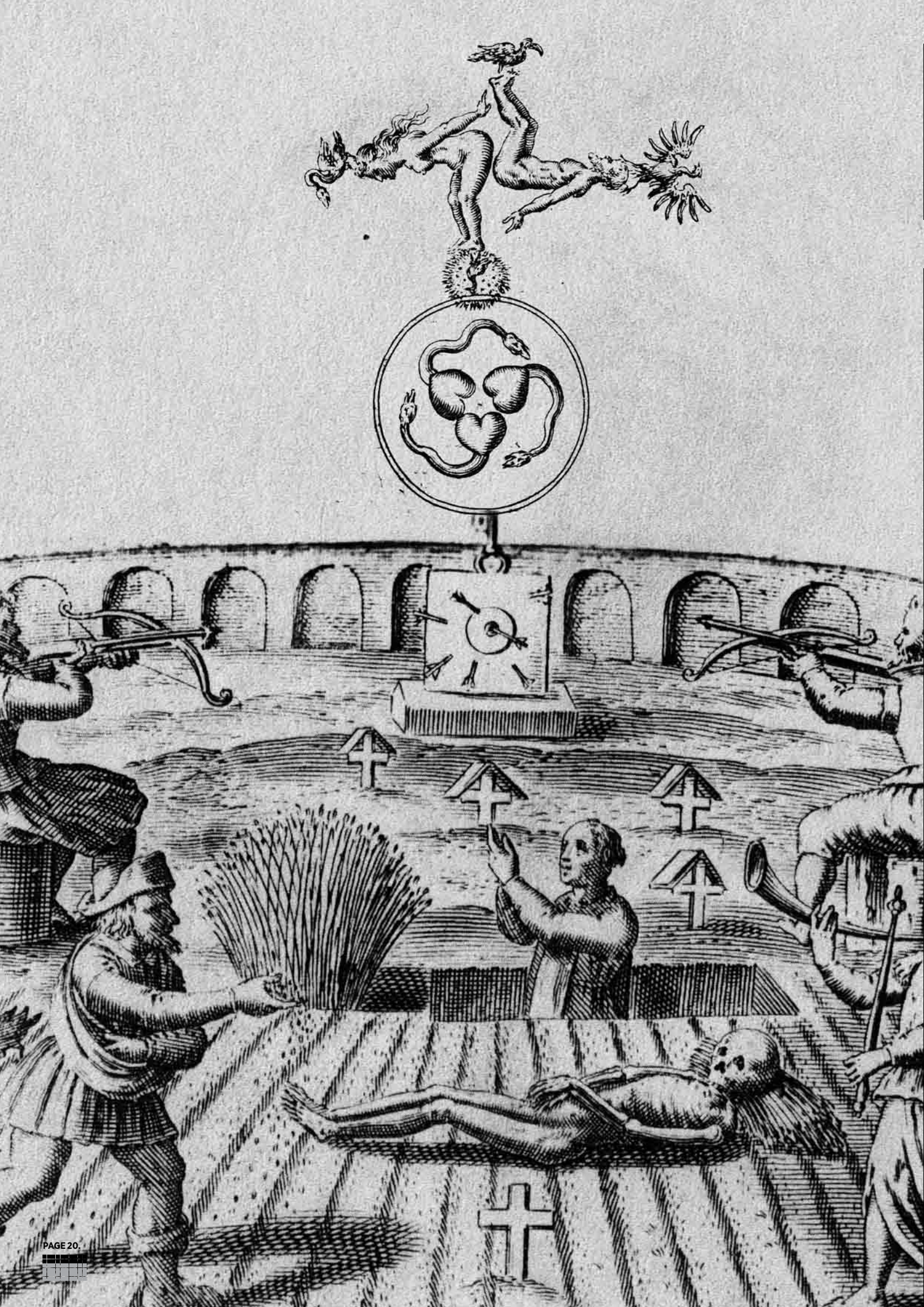
Once during a freak storm, the electricity in our house went out and I was unable to access my hard drives for over five hours. My testicles grew to the size of small watermelons before rupturing and I was rushed to hospital. While I was recovering in ward 7G, I made friends with a small boy named Ross in the bed next to me. He died from cancer the next day so I took his Sony PSP.

Dividing my time between writing professionally on my blog and online as Scott the Invincible are not my only creative outlets. I am also a professional cartoonist. I am much better than Charles Schultz as my ideas are more clever and creative. I would describe my art as cutting edge with my ears to the street and if you don't get my cartoons then 'yo momma' to you nigga. Here is one of my best cartoons - when I originally posted it my hits went up 400% and all four people said that it was unlike any professional material they had ever seen before.

The cartoon above is funny on two levels, which makes it lateral. Firstly, I was looking at porn but said that I wasn't so this is like British comedy and brilliant in itself without the rest. Secondly, I said "make it so", which is what Captain Picard says in Star Trek and I was wearing my Star Trek uniform when I said it. Do you get it? It is probably too clever for you.

If I could give one word of advice to anybody wanting to be a professional blog writer like me, it would be to realise that it does not matter what the subject is, the important thing is how I feel about it. Balance is also important. I find that the best ratio is to have ninety percent of the stories about me and how I feel about things and the remaining ten percent linking to stories about me and how I feel about things.





MOURNING GLORY.

THE UNSETTLING CONCEPT OF THE E-BITUARY.

TOMMY BLANK.

THERE ARE SOME NOTIONS THAT I'M NOT SURE I'LL EVER GET COMFORTABLE WITH. DAME HELEN MIRREN AS A SEX SYMBOL, FOR INSTANCE. OR THE FACT THAT THAT NAZI OBELIX NICK GRIFFIN IS A CAMBRIDGE GRADUATE.

But when it comes to e-bituaries, the term morbid fascination has never been so appropriate.

During my daily inter-stellar exploration of the webosphere I staggered across a website so intriguing, I wasn't quite able to fathom its significance or indeed its potential at first glance, and have felt the need to revisit several times since.

Allow me to introduce you to Obit-Mag.com. Obit is a commonly used abbreviation of obituary across the big blue pond. Fellow disciples of Curb Your Enthusiasm will remember the consequences of leaving Larry David in charge of a loved one's obit. Not recommended.

But in a morose interpretation of the view that the obituaries are one of the most enthusiastically read sections of newspapers, Obit are a dedicated team of professional writers, editors and researchers publishing daily content on the recently deceased to quench this grisly thirst. Simplified, it's a blog for the dearly departed.

The homepage is awash with photographs of the dead (before they expired of course - if you want snaps of corpses I'm sure there are some sinister sites out there for your kind), as well as quotes and discussions about the great inevitable. On the right hand side users are met with Obit Mag's proudest asset; the Just Died list. Clicking on a name will fire up a short obituary and sometimes a photograph. At the time of penning this piece, the latest to kick the proverbial bucket was Dan Duncan, an oil billionaire 'known for his philanthropy and global hunting of exotic animals.' A touching homage.

Behind this eerie spectacle are Bob and Barbera Hillier, oddly a couple better known for their work in architecture. 'Our stories focus on the lives well lived and what death can mean to the living and what living meant to the dead.'

'We challenge traditional stigma about discussion of death and dying. In doing this, we weave together art, prose and reflections on the famous, the firsts and the ordinary folks around us. We don't believe there is any other forum like Obit.'

Too fucking right there isn't.

But what fascinates me isn't the fact that this is a website dedicated to dead people. This is the internet - guaranteed to thrill shock and shock again, and if you've ever played the popular web game Google-Whack you'll know that there's literally a website for everything.

But with Obit Mag, it's the professionalism, the tone and the overall feeling that this is a genuine, well oiled machine practicing a socially acceptable exercise; which of course in Western society, it isn't.

We don't really talk about death. We certainly don't tend to sing and dance about it. As a rule we conventionally tuck the obituaries into the back pages of newspapers nobody reads, somewhere between pleas for companionship from lonely hermaphrodites and classified ads for unwanted oboes. Out of sight, out of mind. That's why Obit Mag is so exceptional.

It's a whole new angle on man's only certainty, but as 2009 showed us (Jackson, Swayze, Murphy, Carradine) news about famous people snuffing it is widely sought after and actually quite interesting.

But Obit is not just about famous perishees. I read a blog piece about how the closure of Standees - a greasy late night diner in Chicago - represented the last hoorah for a town barraged with trendy pasta eateries and how the author had enjoyed what would be his final meal with his dying brother in this dilapidated yet significant dive.

I read Forever Fido, a dry witted account of a (former) dog owner who had struggled to see any profound meaning in the death of his mutt, despite an overwhelming social obligation to do so.

And now I'm hooked.

I've now considered the possibility that I'm just a late bloomer when it comes to a fascination with the bitter end. Most kids I knew at school doodled skulls and bones in their copy books, had ventured into the woods at least once to look for dead bodies, or thought Sixth Sense was anything more than just another predictable Willis flick. Not me.

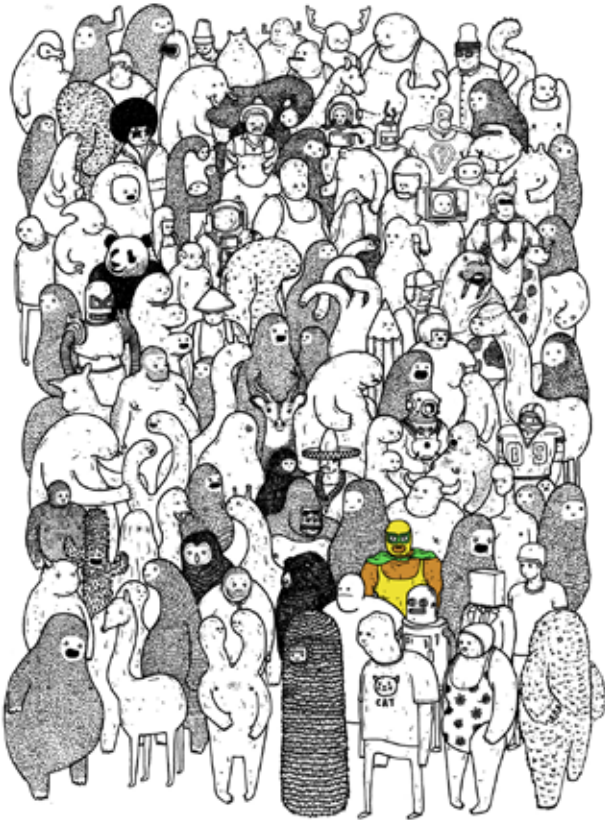
I thought I was done with all things stiff and green after the late nineties, having eagerly watched all seven series of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Apparently not.

But much like Wes Bentley in American Beauty, grinning as his zoom lens ghoulishly pans the gaping hole in Kevin Spacey's brain, I feel the compulsion to hold up this new angle on death and share it.

The dance of the dead has found its feet online, and my advice to you is that you find out about Obit, before Obit finds out about you...



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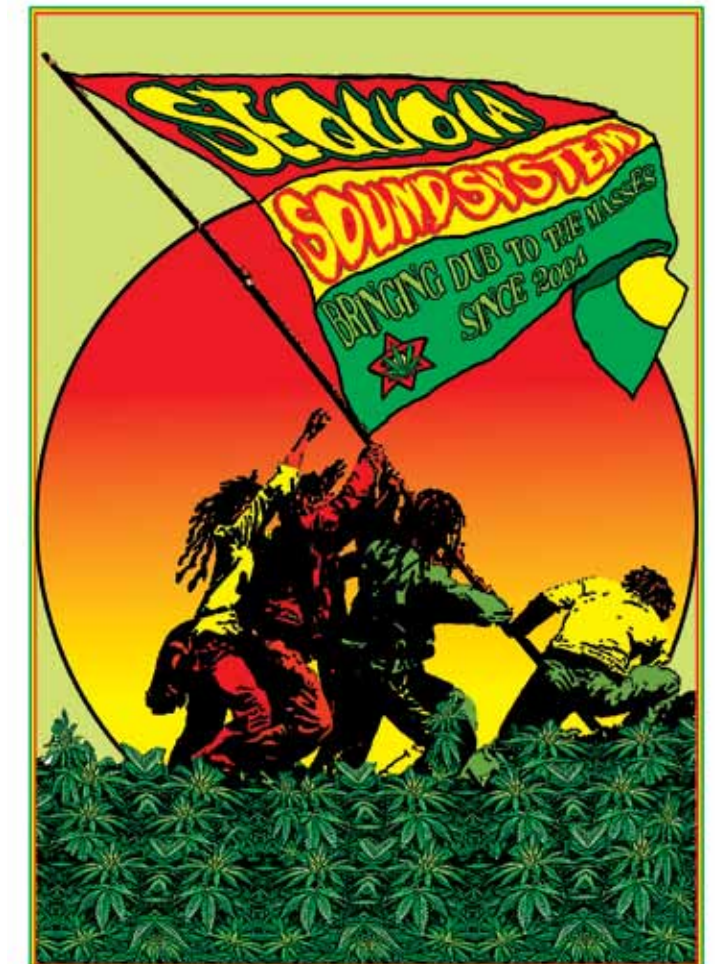
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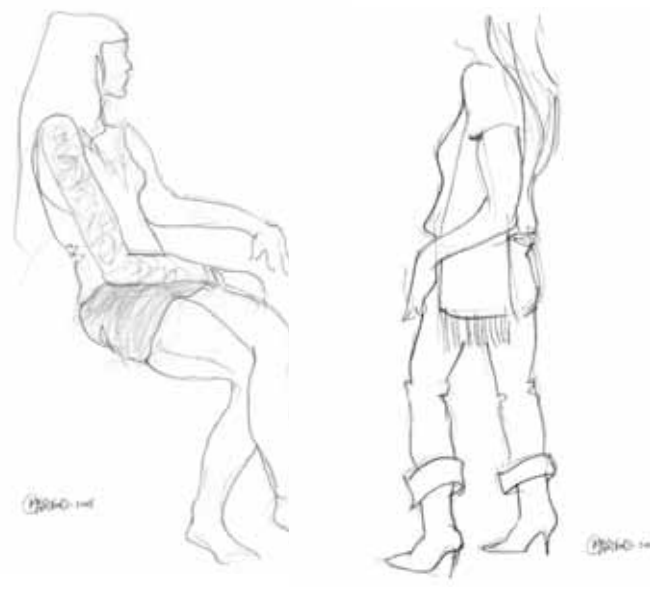
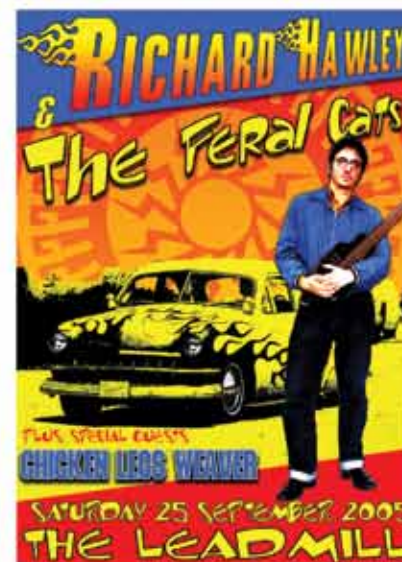
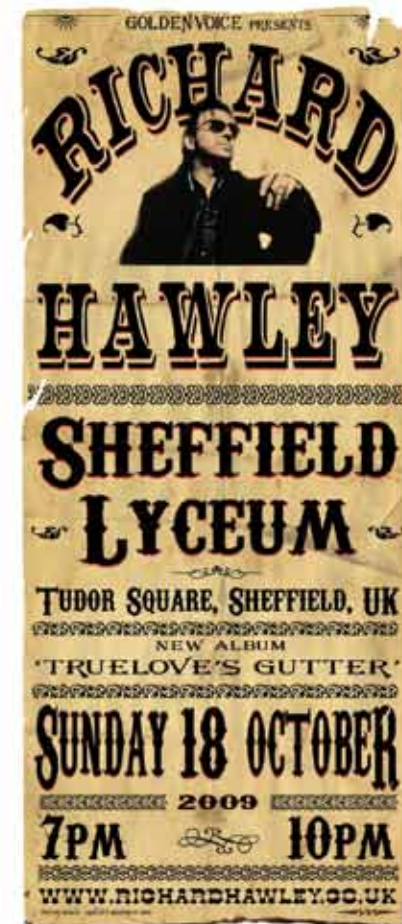
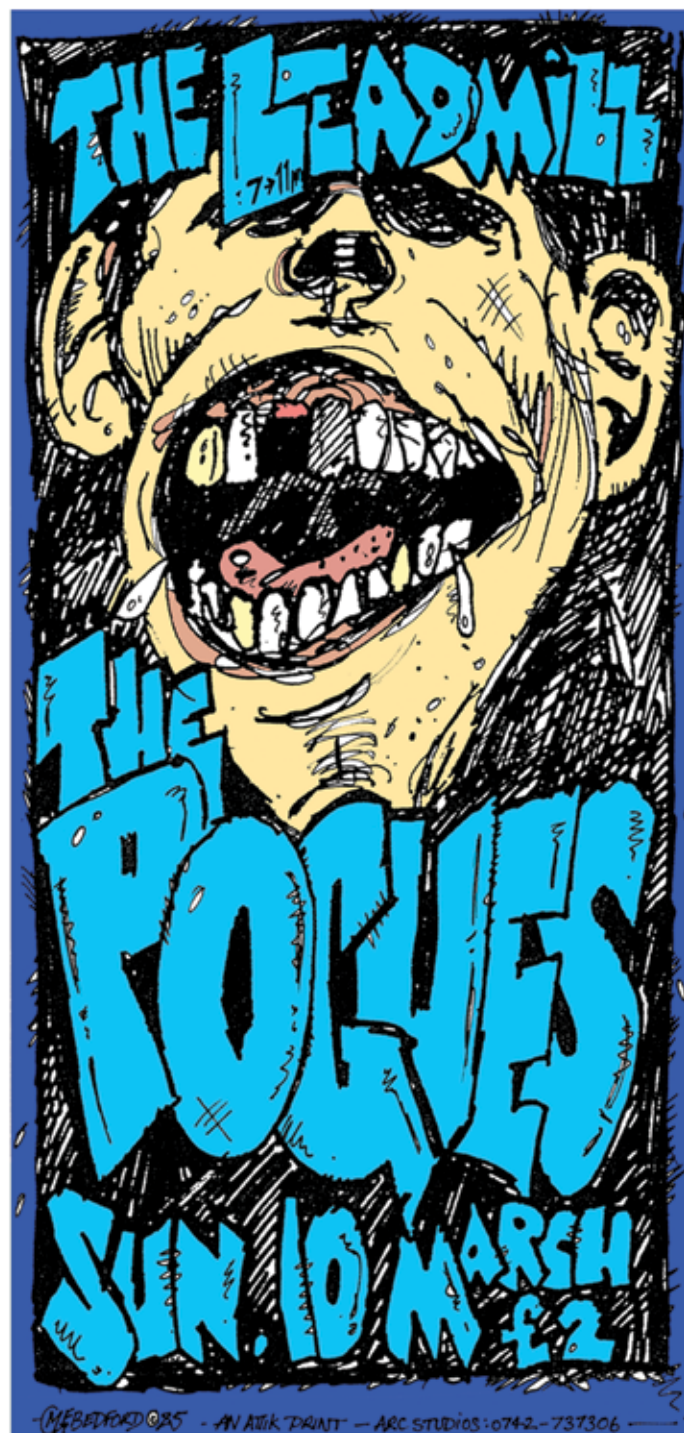
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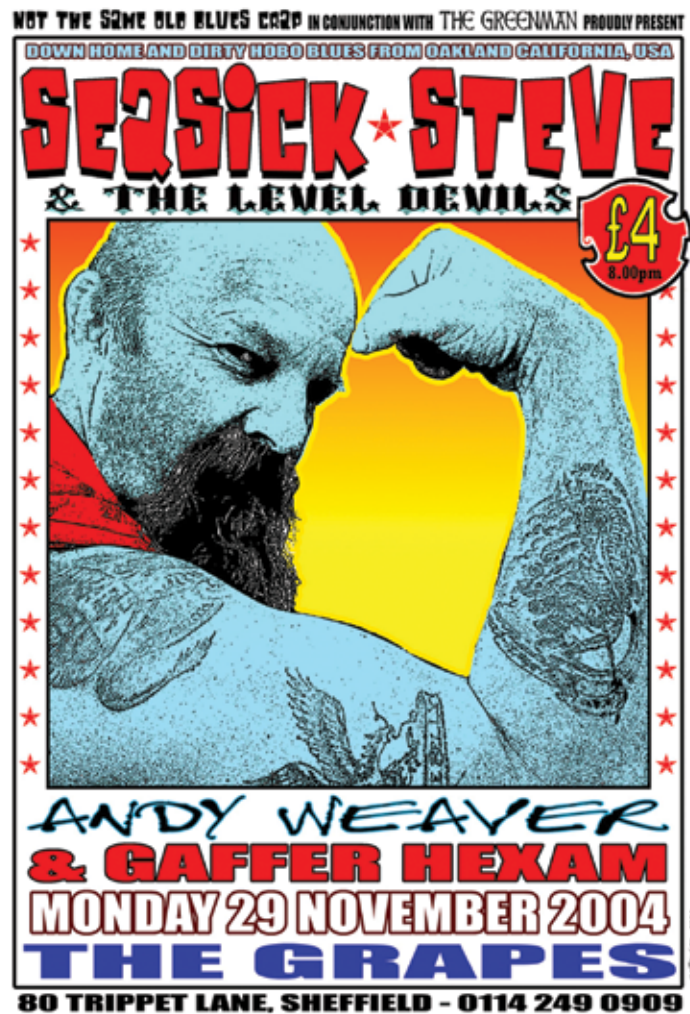
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MARTIN F. BEDFORD.

NO MESSING ABOUT: SHEFFIELD GIG POSTER LEGEND.
THE WORK OF MARTIN F BEDFORD : WORDS BY JONES.

Few artists end up with a client list like this. From the early eighties, starting in the attic of the Leadmill, Martin has produced a steady stream of output for musicians the world over.

Poster art is not pretty. It's not justified by any bullshit around the image, it's not designed for a gallery setting - its entire existence is to convey information for a purpose. It's going to be mass produced, often not printed how you would like to be, and disappear overnight once the gig's finished.

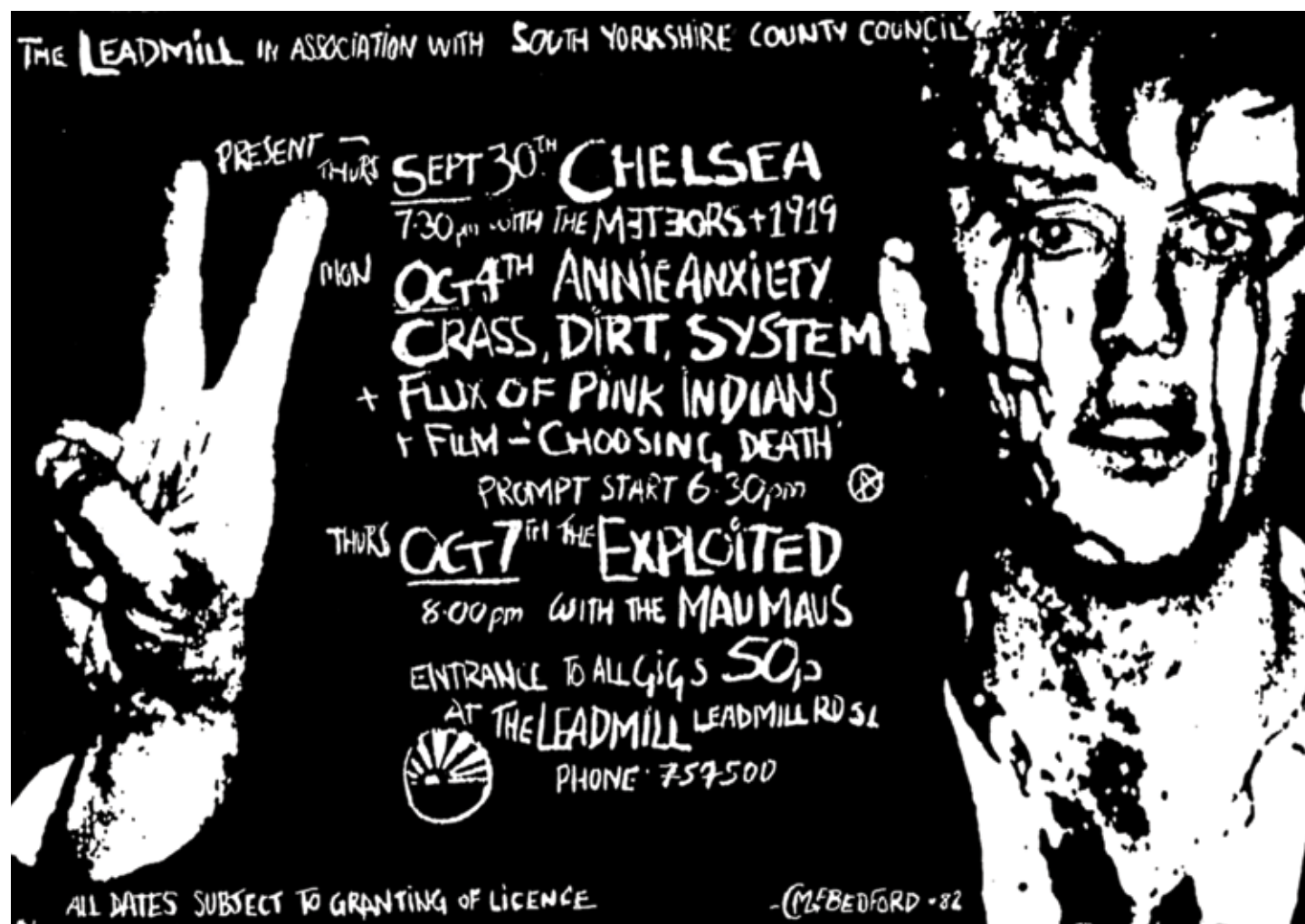
In my own experience with these types of client, dates, acts and venues are often changeable beasts or not decided to the last minute. Let alone the promoter in question remembering to ask you to start the work...!

The successful poster artist has to work incredibly quickly and churn out a wide variety of styles that can be applied to any job quickly and efficiently. The truly good ones can do anything and their touch can be seen in it instantly.

Martin's work has haunted my existence in Sheffield for as long as I've had eyes. The punk, d.i.y. and screenprint aesthetic that continues throughout his work will always inspire me. Art for me is about products - getting summat done and moving onto the next, probably making mistakes as you go but learning from it.

The fact that every live music gig I've been to that's been any good has always had Martin perched at the back with a pint confirms he is a man of taste and actually gives a fuck about the world he works in, which in these days of mass style without substance its refreshing to see.

We are very pleased to announce that Martin will be curating an edition of Now Then in the very near future featuring world famous names from the world of poster art. and some new breed amazing talent. One for the collectors I reckon...





SHE DIDN'T JUST FUCK THE GOVERNMENT





To Whom It May Concern,

I'm starting to come to terms with the fact that I didn't shoot from the womb to a theme of Aphex Twin or a 'cool' contemporary band. No, it was more like Belinda Carlisle or Neneh Cherry ('Buffalo Stance' is an absolute humdinger, to be fair...)

Over the years it's highly likely we have at points had a tendency to be swept along by the currents of popularity and disregard music we grew up on. Like dumping an old, reliable childhood friend for a cooler kid who doesn't tuck used tissues into their sleeves.

Our music taste 'matures', but what do we mean by mature? I guess it's just layering - our experiences increase as our tastes expand. I'm not talking about increasing snobbery but it makes sense to see it as a sort of sophisticated musical filter.

This has its pros and its cons. Often in the dawn of our relationship with music we are a blank canvas, untainted by the music media and the opinions of music snobs (like the one I have turned into). Innocence can be key. I don't mean that in a patronising way, but there was a time where I was fearless in the face of music criticism and not afraid to call a spade a spade or a bad drone record 'a load of noise...shitty noise'. Now, Pitchfork reviews have been known to make grown men soil themselves.

Sometimes it takes 'authority' or a cherished figure to admit they like a certain disco tune before hip kids the world over will breathe a sigh of relief and finally be able to listen to Cool and The Gang in public. It's like giving us a mandate to stand up and admit it in an AA meeting.

A small part regrets giving away albums that I stopped listening to at some point to friends - Yellowcard, Hoobastank...a very small part of me, I'm talking like one skin cell maybe. You never know, in another five years you might crave some of that nostalgia. These tunes are like stepping stones - if you don't want to listen to them again you don't bloody have to, but you can't undermine the importance they have at some point in shaping your musical taste. Although it doesn't fill one with much optimism to know that the magazines one was reading five of six years ago still feature the bands one was listening to five or six years ago. They're on loop and they need to burn their bridges and stop the editor getting sponsored by the bands' management.

On Last.fm people constantly jeer at each other's tastes, writing on bands profiles that they are shit, taking more time and effort to put down these groups than to promote the ones they claim to obsess over. A bit like the big macho hetero guys in films who are super homophobic but end up coming out the closet by the end of the film. These people are secretly repressed melody lovers. On the other hand there's nothing worse than someone who clings on for dear life to their past. Their mp3 player hasn't had a facelift in a good five years, they're lost in a plaid and leather vortex of nu metal and grunge.

As our tastes develop they morph into super taste. We inevitably learn to appreciate the isolated tools that go into constructing pieces of music that are more incestuous than the Hapsburg dynasty (try Googling Hapsburg lip, it's a mildly entertaining dental defect). As an art form music is constantly borrowing and stealing from other tunes and probably never more so than today. We live in an age of mashups, remixes, collaborations and covers. Some choose to revive a tune, others choose to mutilate it. Now is apparently a time when it's getting increasingly hard to put things in a box. The 'musical tribes' business is a dying breed. No longer can we exercise the stereotype muscles of preconceived ideas or ascribe someone a musical interest or cultural identity just by looking at them. Probably cos of globalisation innit. If you were to plot the coordinates of musical whims you might find now to be the point on the axis where they all meet.

So consider this is a sort of open letter of apology to the past. I turned my auditory back on you and for that I am truly sorry - except for you Hoobastank and Yellowcard. No, you were always meant to reside in a dustbin, destined to fester in the juices of your own stunted creativity.

A ROUGH GUIDE TO MY MEANDERING TASTES IN MUSIC THROUGHOUT MY EXISTENCE THUS FAR:

The 'I may live in suburbia but my minidisc playa would suggest otherwise. Brrrap' urban years (2000-2002)

- SEAN DA PAUL.
- DR DRE.
- LUDACRIS.
- BLAZIN SQUAD (JUST THE ONE SONG, MIND)
- K-CI & JOJO.

The 'I'm basically straight edge, I'm too young to drink and smoke and chicken's basically a fruit' years (2003-2004)

- FAITH NO MORE.
- METALLICA.
- KILLSWITCH ENGAGE.
- AVENGED SEVENFOLD.
- LOSTPROPHETS.

The 'I just listen to music that sounds like the apocalypse and moves at a glacial pace all day everyday' years (2005-2006)

- BLACK METAL.
- MELVINS.
- DOOM.
- DRONE.
- PELICAN.
- SUNNO))).

ELECTRIC WIZARD
(I never smoked weed during this period of my life, which is completely bizarre.)

The 'Indie hipstah branching into brighter things because the metal magazines started featuring too many weird neo Nazi sentiments and cheesy photoshoots with Dragonforce' years (2007-2008)

- TV ON THE RADIO.
- WORLD MUSIC.
- TROJAN.

2010 and beyond...

WELL, NOW IT'S A FREE FOR ALL...



REVIEWS.

MULATU ASTATKE. RUDI ZYGADLO.

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS. SAM AMIDON.

MULATU ASTATKE. MULATU STEPS AHEAD. STRUT.



Reviewer – Sam Breen.

Mulatu Astatke is on the radar. Thanks to Stones Throw Records, Astatke is cool. If he was on World Circuit he wouldn't be as cool. If Soundway or Soul Jazz, he would be less cool, but equally revered. If he was on Sublime Frequencies it's possible that he might be a little cooler, likewise with Honest Jon's...but it's doubtful. Bottom-line - it's difficult to imagine someone as cool. However, Astatke won't be bothered by this measurement of cool. On Mulatu Steps Ahead there's a different type of cool being explored, as in Cool, uppercase 'C'. This is Cool as in Jazz does 'Cool'. COOL, cool. Got it?

As usual, Astatke takes a back seat for most of the compositions. For much of it, like his work with the Heliocentrics, he is hidden under layers of instrumentals. He sits behind the piano only occasionally raising the mallets of his vibraphone into sight.

Much of **Mulatu Steps Ahead** sounds like he's stepping towards sophistication. This record captures how the polar sounds of Ethiopian jazz, from the raw drones and harsh aesthetics, can sit side by side its more decadent sounds. The pinnacle of these ideas arrives in closing track 'Motherland', a paean to tradition loaded with rich sounds. As warm as it is melancholic, it's a beautiful send off piece.

The tracks dance between these two concepts with incredible ease. Opening track 'Radcliff' is soft in its calm contemplation of ideas. Acting as the record's overture, Astatke reserves himself, leaving a trumpet solo as an introduction. Follow-up track 'Green Africa' offers this juxtaposition with abrasive low-end tenor sax drones. There's a snappy folk melody, subtle rhythm changes and a vibrant atmosphere.

Geographically, the record isn't exclusively African. A mixture of reservation akin to Birth of Cool-era Jazz and a focus on the forms, plus the heavy use of trumpet melodies results in the ultimate sound sharing ideology with the West. Maybe this shouldn't be a surprising concept - the tracks were recorded in London and Massachusetts between 2007 and 2009, and many of the musicians on the record are of the jazz set rather than of roots and folk. The relatively slow tempo, which dominates much of the record, only furthers this idea.

'Ethio Blues' - with 'blues' being at its most academic - uses a walking bassline blueprint for a track that swiftly diverges from any of the genre's prerequisites. If anything, the song sits awkwardly on a record that for the most part is very smooth.

Central to the record - its zenith, perhaps - is the eponymous 'Mulatu's Mood'. The deep percussion and afro beat provide a platform for Astatke to lose himself. It's the high level of musicianship and wild complexity that makes this the album's showpiece, from the hypnotic drums to the looping trumpets broken by snappy drum kicks. If there were any reason to spend two years in the studio, it would be to package this track safely in a mesmerising record.

As the West continues to explore Africa and embellish its many cultures, Mulatu Steps Ahead acts as a proponent of liberalism and travelled sophistication. More please.

RUDI ZYGADLO. GREAT WESTERN LAYMEN. PLANET MU.



Reviewer - Jack Scourfield.

Imagine, if you will, that you're a contestant on television fool-fest **Total Wipeout**. You've successfully negotiated the **Sweeper**, the **Big Balls**, that wall that punches you in the face and groin, and everything else that **Richard Hammond** has to throw at you, and you've now reached the final obstacle course. At the end of the course lies a prize of £10,000. However, getting to the reward is no easy task, and will take a fair degree of patience and hard-work.

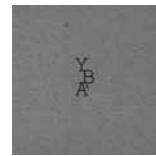
The same applies to **Great Western Laymen**, the debut album from young Glaswegian Rudi Zygadlo. On first listening, Zygadlo's album is so confusing and sonically dense that it's pretty daunting. He's said that he was aiming for a wall of sound on the album, with any gaps filled somehow - whether by screeches, vocals, or whatever takes his fancy. There's certainly a constant bombardment of sounds being thrown at you, akin to the section of the **Total Wipeout** course where the contestant must run up a ramp while a stream of large inflatable balls are rolled at them. It can be tricky on first listen to fully dodge everything that Zygadlo continually shoves in the listener's direction, and on my first attempt at the obstacle course I was unable to overcome the objects in my way and ended up floundering in a chilly pool of water while Hammond chuckled over my misfortunes in slow-motion replay.

One thing was certain though; no matter how tough Planet Mu's latest bright prospect had made his musical assault course, he'd constructed it very well. I've seen him compared to, amongst others, Frank Zappa and Aphex Twin, and there's definitely the same element of controlled chaos in Zygadlo's work, where even the most random sounding sequences actually tie together to form a well rounded result. Determined to have another crack at winning the big £10,000 prize, I towelled myself down, strapped on my helmet and got stuck in to the course for a second time. Now that I knew that I was to face a constant barrage of challenging obstacles, I started being able to sidestep the ones that had initially thrown me off balance, and could now begin to enjoy what had been put in front of me. Underneath all the bells and whistles there's an elegant and placid murmur present on the album, which might arise from Zygadlo's love of classical music and jazz, while the vocals on the record ethereally flicker in and out, acting as a layer of grace and finesse over the quagmire of beats.

Once you've taken the more confounding elements of this record in to consideration, you'll find an album that's generally satisfying. Tracks such as 'Filthy Logic' and 'Resealable Friendship' are particularly worth running the course for, but I'd estimate that the eventual prize money equates to more like a grand, rather than Total Wipeout's £10k.

So, Rudi Zygadlo: you owe me a grand.

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS. LIVED IN SKIN / MILLION MILES (7" SINGLE). RED DEER CLUB RECORDINGS.



Reviewer – Ian Pennington.

Young British Artists have seemed an anomaly (barring By The Fireside) on the Red Deer Club Recordings roster since the release of the debut **Small Waves EP** last year. Their fast-paced indie guitars would probably be more suited to fellow Manc label Akoustik Anarkhy for its thickness and urgency of sound. RDC's leading lights have long been more folk-oriented ear-caressers – think Sophie's Pigeons, Sara Lowes, David A Jaycock, George Thomas and The Owls. Such diversification is rarely a bad thing, though.

RDC's 24th release lays a different ambience to the aforementioned norm from the word go. Hi-hat and drum rolls meet the serene keys intro, which underpins most of the opening track, 'Lived In Skin'. Amps set to high reverb, jangly plucks are soon ushered in along with angsty, accented vocals. There are glimmers of a less poetic Idlewild; instead singer Leo Scott seems obscured, orating from behind the wall of sound created by his own bass guitar and those around him – electric guitar, drums and keyboards.

It is followed up by 'Million Miles', early 90s indie-by-numbers with a screeching central guitar jab, somehow reminiscent of an off-kilter flashing beacon in the mind's eye, accompanied by another picked riff and merrier, more relaxed strums.

Sharing a moniker with the Young British Artists conceptual art movement, popularised in the 1990s by the likes of Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst, it must be said that YBA (the band) offer a minimum of shock value or innovation by comparison. However, in terms of shaking up the Red Deer Club output, their fuzzy, high-energy direction remains a new one.



SAM AMIDON. I SEE THE SIGN. BEDROOM COMMUNITY.



Reviewer – Lambertus Prent.

Sam Amidon occupies a strange musical limbo. To be both traditional and avant-garde is no enviable task – get the balance wrong and before you know it you are floundering in a mess of straw hats, farm yard animals and sickly twee indulgence. But Sam is a folk singer in the purest sense, taking old songs and making them his own. A boy wonder on the fiddle and the son of two (apparently) famous Vermont musicians, he has folk in his veins and it doesn't take long for **I See The Sign** to illustrate this point.

One of the first things that hits you about this album is how quietly understated the whole thing is. Despite the power of some of these songs, it is entirely possible for the whole album to slip past in the background without vying for your attention, only being noted by its absence as its last notes fade away. This is partly due to Amidon's softly softly voice, which manages to convey raw emotion without ever straining or cracking, and partly due to the production of Bedroom Community label head Valgeir Sigurdsson, whose barebones approach adds atmosphere and subtlety at every turn.

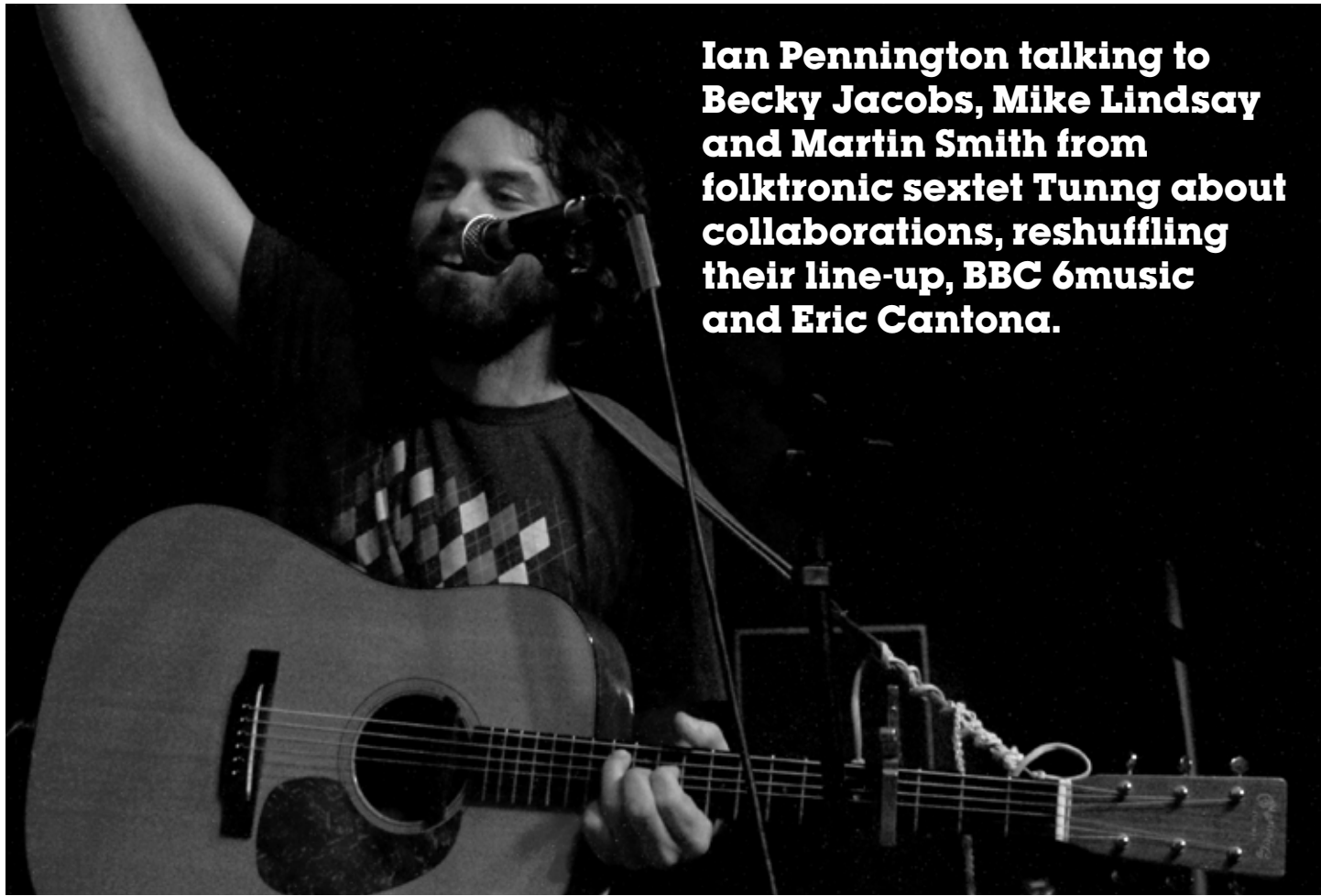
Despite featuring the album's most electronic elements courtesy of contributions from Ben Frost, opener 'How Come That Blood' still somehow manages to sound organic. A plucked banjo is backed up by a Moog bass and shakers that create a kind of country shuffle, embellished with strings and pitched percussion. A bit of a false start in many ways, since the newly-introduced electronic elements of his music take a back seat for the majority of the album. 'Rain and Snow' is another contender for strongest track and an example of how intrinsic Sigurdsson's sparse production is to **I See The Sign**.

'You Better Mind' is probably the closest this album gets to pop, with a catchy chorus and vocal contributions from Beth Orton. It is the most radio-friendly and least endearing track here, eschewing delicate ambience for rhythmic strumming.

The biggest shock here is 'Relief'. It is a cover of an unreleased R. Kelly song, but it's not rubbish.

In honesty, **I See The Sign** is not a patch on its predecessor, the glorious **All Is Well**, and from time to time it takes the leap from archaic folk to quaint twee indulgence. Such are the pitfalls of making old songs new, yet parts of this album are genuinely alluring and worth your time.





Ian Pennington talking to Becky Jacobs, Mike Lindsay and Martin Smith from folktronic sextet Tunng about collaborations, reshuffling their line-up, BBC 6music and Eric Cantona.



PHOTO: SIMON BRAY.

TUNNG.

FOLKTRONIC SEXTET TALK ABOUT THEIR CRAFT.

INTERVIEW BY IAN PENNINGTON.

It's been an eventful time for Tunng in the lead-up to the release of their fourth album ...And Then We Saw Land earlier this year. Previously gaining renown at the forefront of the 'folktronic' genre-mash, some critics have suggested that the scene has moved on without Tunng, but various side projects in the intervening years since their previous full-length, 2007's Good Arrows, have had a cohesive effect on the latest record. Tonight's show debuts the new tracks, shaped (or, reshaped) by their adventures.

Their recent history has to start with Malian blues collective Tinariwen. When Tunng were approached by BBC Radio 3 to take part in the Late Junction show, in which bands of differing styles are asked to work together and produce homogenised music to be broadcast over the airwaves, they pitched the idea of Tinariwen as a long shot. There were language barriers, time constraints, scheduling and distances to overcome, as Becky explains:

"We suggested Tinariwen – Martin was a big fan and he'd been playing the record in the van when we'd been on tour before. We thought it was a bit of a long shot - you know, they live in Mali, they're always touring and they probably don't know who we are - but we asked them and pitched it, and it happened."

"Their manager speaks French, and I speak a bit of French, but I've got no vocab about music and stuff like that! I didn't know their music that well but a couple of the guys in Tunng were really big fans of theirs so we wanted to play with them and were really open to it, and I think that they were really open as well."

Having organised the pairing there was no guarantee of a tight-knit harmony, but testament to the power of their shared musical understanding was a follow-up tour. The dates were sold out under the heading of Tunng with Tinariwen, a predictable tag given that Tunng lined up in its entirety (which at the time was without vocalist Sam Genders) while Tinariwen's contribution was three of their many band members (Becky: "They were the upcoming part of the band, with them being younger guys interested in new technology and that side to what we do"). Still, eight people from two unfamiliar groups merged together has the potential to fall flat on its face, so Becky believes that the success of the collaboration has undoubtedly had a lasting effect on both bands.

"It was a really amazing experience for us as a band. I think that when you collaborate, you're forced to think of new ideas and raise your game. Mike took a couple of sonic elements as well in terms of production. The beat from 'Hustle' is a bit of a borrow from a Tinariwen thing... but it was also about the way we are onstage and the way we arrange stuff, because they never rehearse the way we rehearse. Their idea of rehearsal is to sit around and jam for hours around a fire, then every time they play a song they do it in a different way. So from all the songs we collaborated on I don't think there was ever a time when it was exactly the same arrangement and that forced us to loosen up a bit."

Tunng are no strangers to musical collaboration and Becky says they aren't afraid to leave their folkie comfort zone when it comes to performing: "We did a collaboration at a festival called Trans Musicales in France. It's a bit like SONAR. They have this big air hanger where bands play in the evening and we did this thing in a theatre where we collaborated with Buck 65 – he's Canadian hip hop basically so that's pretty different...We've played a lot of shows and it feels nice for us to have the opportunity to do something that forces us to rethink the way we do things."

Sam Genders, a co-founding member of Tunng along with Mike Lindsay, recently stepped away from the band, having previously been around for most, but not all, of their existence (Becky: "He was always key in terms of songwriting but he kind of dipped in and out of us being a live band").

It was a collective effort to replace him for ...**And Then We Saw Land** but Becky insists that it still feels like the same band under the Tunng moniker.

"For the album before this **Good Arrows**, we recorded in a slightly different way; Mike and Sam had always worked closely together. Sometimes Mike would say, "I've got this," and Sam would say, "well I've got lyrics to it,"; sometimes Sam would turn up with a complete song and, on Good Arrows, he and I worked on a couple of tracks and took them to Mike. But in terms of the writing this time... people just came with ideas. I mean, Sam is a brilliant songwriter and musician and we didn't want to be like 'we've got to try and be Sam' because it's impossible, but we realise that we all have something else to bring to the table that is still Tunng and is still interesting and exciting. So I feel like this is very much our record."

Despite the various collaborations and side projects, Martin feels that they could digest new ideas properly. "[Sam] was prolific in a sense – he'd write something very quickly then we'd capture it very quickly, but I think what's happened is that there's a bit more reflection. We could put much more mix and blend into it; we just had a bit more... time. It didn't feel so snatched. We suddenly got closer to deadlines so that sort of speeded things up, but I suppose we just shifted focus a little bit."

Becky agrees that having everything all at once fitted into place for them; helping and not hindering the new record. "I think some of the different projects, like the Tinariwen tour, really helped us. It was inspiring and a lot of the stuff we'd been working on suddenly came together really well."

Mike highlights another side project that proved fruitful in allowing ideas to develop, "We did the soundtrack to a French film, and the good thing about that was it sort of took our minds off the album, doing something completely different then coming back to it again. It is called 'Ensemble C'est Trop'. It's quite a cheesy film but..." Becky interrupts: "It's got Eric Cantona in it! But I haven't seen it – good music though!"

As one of many bands who've benefitted from radio coverage on BBC 6music over the years, Tunng are understandably against its closure, but they recommend other listening habits, even if the listener will be forced to put their internet connection to use in order to find them. Becky starts by admitting, "Yeah, it's terrible for us, I mean they've really supported us and it'll be a real shame for alternative, non-mainstream music if they get rid of that – and the Asian Network, I think that's an important station as well. I remember when I first heard 6music and I thought 'ooh this is good'. It can be a bit middle-aged but they play some good stuff."

Mike: "Have you heard of Resonance FM? I think it's the most individual radio station out there; it's got anything that's a bit wonky or experimental..." Becky: "Yeah, you should check it out. It's a bit... wacky – some of their shows are just birds and stuff."

As Martin points out, "Tonight is a bit of a first for the album," so Manchester's Band on the Wall is the first audience to witness the new material performed live. Mike says that there's one song that still stands out as one they can't not play at shows: "'Bullets' – it's the biggest song we've ever had. Becky: "It's like us saying, you're going to see Beyoncé; you want to see 'Single Ladies'! You know, you can't not hear that – you'd be like, what?! So I think 'Bullets' is our 'Single Ladies'..."

And as for the near future?

Becky: "We'll be doing some festivals; Wood Festival, Larmer Tree Festival, Bestival, maybe Glastonbury, but we're not sure yet and we're doing a European tour for a couple of weeks. And maybe a couple more UK festivals as part of our tour in July – we're only doing four UK dates at the moment and we'd like to do a proper tour..."



ANTIPOP CONSORTIUM.

6TH APRIL @ THE HARLEY.
REVIEWER - CHRIS WICKS.

As this one came over the hill it felt like a mirage. How can Anti-Pop Consortium, Warp Records mainstays and NYC alt hip hop legends as they are, be playing the Harley? And how does it cost a frickin' FIVER?!

Clearly, this gig was an absolute coup for all involved, spectacularly so for the bargain hunter. APC have only recently returned to the scene after breaking up somewhat acrimoniously in 2002. However, the swaggering digital grooves and heady ramblings that sounded so unique back then have now permeated hip hop's inner psyche, and these pioneers of the current swathe of glitchy boom bap rhythms have returned for a piece of the pixelated pie.

Their comeback album, 2009's **Flourescent Black**, thankfully proved that this reunion was backed up by real drive and creativity, reiterating that this seminal collective are alive and invigorated. Quite how the night's promoters, Children for Breakfast, managed to persuade them to rock into one of Sheffield's more intimate venues is some mystery.

Tables of synthesizers and sequencers intriguingly took up half the floor space of the Harley's makeshift stage, and during a brief soundcheck the four members of APC looked reassuringly relaxed as they shared cans of Red Stripe. MCs Beans and High Priest began the set with their backs to us, and for good reason as, together with fellow MC M Sayyid and producer Earl Blaize, they launched into a four-way live jam, programming crisp and buggy beats to feed a receptive crowd.

I have often thought that hip hop is under-appreciated in Sheffield, and was worried about how positively such a leftfield act may be received (especially when tickets were available just days before the event). I needn't have been anxious. Anti Pop maintained a high tempo throughout most of the early exchanges and the band's stripped down and dirty live sound struck a chord with a youthful audience. Sayyid hyped up the crowd and the band settled into classics like 'Dead in Motion' with a bounce.

Enter Beans. His solo output already marks him down as the band's star, but his quick euphoric staccato delivery and endearingly manic on-beat head tipping made him irrepressible on stage. With his tilted trilby hat and etched grin, he became a crowd favourite, although it is the interaction of the three distinct styles of the MCs which gives the group such dynamism on stage. High Priest, whose own speedy delivery is more deadpan, is the last to reach a level with the audience. Wearing his shades throughout, he is the cool balance to add old-skool grit to the concoction.

After a relentless stomp through segments of the group's latest album, Beans was granted centre stage for an acapella segment that highlighted the flexibility of his voice. Instinctively throwing his head left-to-right as he relayed syllables, the MC swept up and down the musical scale as he entranced the hushed crowd with his laid-back melodic style. After this exquisite showmanship the group returned with the devilish 'Ping Pong' and their bass monster, 'Ghostlowns', thereby treating this humble crowd to the biggest bombs in the APC arsenal.

At the end, after a show that delivered everything, Sheffield was heartily grateful. APC, too, clearly enjoyed their time here and have apparently already said that they will be back. Be warned - it might just be more than a fiver next time.

ACOUSTIC LADYLAND.

7TH APRIL @ THE HARLEY.
REVIEWER - RICH HARRISON.

In a city where cutting-edge jazz is all but absent, Acoustic Ladyland's second appearance was a thirst-quenching glass of jazz-champagne. Founding members Pete Wareham (sax) and Seb Rochford (drums) - both members of the heavyweight F-IRE collective, BBC Best Jazz Band-nominated Polar Bear and Fulborn Teversham - join Ruth Goller on bass and Chris Sharkey on guitar to form one of the most exciting experimental musical groups around.

Opening the night was Sheffield's Kill The Captains. Having just released their new album, **Fun Anxiety**, the band has recently been touring the UK. I have seen Kill the Captains twice now, but have never enjoyed their music as much as this. Be sure to see these guys live to fully appreciate their sound - poppy, discordant-rock with elements of Sonic Youth. Extra thanks to the band for organising this night. Booking this kind of music is a risk, but one that Sheffield music lovers should be very grateful for.

Second billing was Leeds-based Bilge Pump. The trio delivered a remarkably full, super-tight, heavy sound with bucket loads of musicianship. Special shout-out to drummer Neil Turpin, who smashed out some incredible rhythms. Highlights included the finale, when Emlyn Jones (bass/vocals) and Joe Mask (guitar/vocals) demonstrated full control of feedback, creating unsettling, amelodic backgrounds coupled with Turpin's rhythmic mastery. Inspirational. I did find some riffs too predictable and the vocals were often uninspiring, but all in all Bilge Pump were an extraordinary band to see live and we were spoilt to have that kind of quality as a support act.

As for the headliner, I admit my opinion is biased: Acoustic Ladyland are one of my all-time favorite bands. Their music genuinely crosses genres, punching you in the gut with heavy rock/punk licks, mashed-up sounds, melodies with cutting-edge jazz sensibility and incendiary improvisation. The back section is unbelievable: Tom Herbert's replacement Ruth Goller hammers heavy, no-nonsense lines underneath Rochford's astounding beats. I guarantee that Rochford is one of the most mesmerizing drummers you will ever watch; his playing made more incredible because he appears to be daydreaming the whole time. Effortless brilliance.

Considering it was his first ever appearance with the band, guitarist Sharkey shone, rinsing everything from messed-up chords and effects to creepy, atonal solos. Wareham boasted more effects than I have seen him use in the past, spending more of his set creating weird, atmospheric noise than wailing amazingly on his Selmer. As a fan of his unique, raw, vocal tone, I would like to have heard more pure saxophone, but he backed off to showcase Sharkey as a new member.

This was Acoustic Ladyland at their most experimental, briefly referencing songs before embarking on protracted but engrossing solos, challenging listeners and rousing lovers of original music. This was an incredible set.

CONCRETE JUNGLE.

16TH APRIL @ THE HARLEY.
REVIEWER - BEN DOREY.

Concrete Jungle is a fairly new player in the Sheffield bass music scene, but is rapidly becoming the city's most credible regular jungle night, especially with Bass Bar's current dormancy. Taking over the Harley once a month, they give some of Sheffield's forgotten talents a chance to pummel an up-for-it crowd with successive batteries of amen breaks, as well as paying attention to the roots of the genre with warm ups that sometimes include jazz, steppas, reggae and ragga.

Resident regular K.I.D.L.I.B was warming things up when we arrived, celebrating his birthday with a musical education in the development of his sound and the scene that grew up around Junglist Alliance. For those of you who don't know much about the man, K.I.D.L.I.B is perhaps one of the city's finest underground producers, bringing fresh sets of original dubplates with him everywhere he plays. This time around we were treated to the best of the bunch, a truly remarkable set of tunes to rival the best in the UK scene, from cascading near-breakcore to R'n'B jungle cuts. The highlight of my night.

Next up was Smileymaxx, another talented homegrown DJ and one of the Concrete Jungle's founders. The man blended more established jungle cuts into hard edged rarities with great proficiency and a minimum of fuss, enabling an easy slip into the 'musical meditation and appreciation' that is the night's tagline. Sticking to vinyl for a good proportion of his set brought the warmth out of bouncing 808's rolling from the Dubclub bins nicely too.

Headlining the night was DJ Eazy D, an old time Sheffield jungle player who's been on the music scene since a time before the majority of the crowd were born. Biggest in the nineties, with a weekly slot on one of Sheffield's pirate stations, this will have been a nostalgia trip for some, but for most (myself included) it was a new experience. Beginning with hip hop and R n' B jungle crossovers before moving into harder sounds, Eazy D's set had the sensibilities of the mid-nineties period in which jungle was blending into the more straight up rhythms of drum 'n' bass. This is perhaps better for straight up raving but was not as interesting for the ears as earlier sets by the residents. A more egocentric style of mixing - with multiple rewinds and stops - also disrupted the flow set by those on before. However, it was by no means unenjoyable and was stronger than 90% of drum 'n' bass sets booked by more well known Sheffield promoters.

Can you fault a night in which the residents are so good that they overshadow good bookings? I think not. Two thumbs firmly up for the Concrete Jungle.

LANTERN FESTIVAL.

11TH APRIL @ SHARROW.
REVIEWER - LUCY HORWOOD.

In a celebration of creative arts and community spirit, the streets of London Road and Sharrow Vale were blasted with a colourful infusion of music and creativity as a flood of hand-crafted lanterns flocked to Mount Pleasant Park to embark upon the procession of the Sharrow Lantern Carnival. The communal project was launched by the artists and organisers of Creative Action Network as a march of peace and appeals to all ages and creative abilities. In close collaboration with King Mojo Sheffield Presents, who dish up a trusty serving of musical opulence, the event takes the local community by storm in a visionary spectacle.

A buzzing throng of locals scatter across the park to proudly bear or simply admire the music-themed lanterns - each a personal work of art in its own right. The rhythmical beat of bongo drums amid a summery festival hum set the chilled out yet high spirited tone of the evening as the congregation anticipated the fall of darkness. My very own paper lantern courtesy of the Highfield Church Lantern workshops now seemed to resemble a dubious looking crustacean as opposed to the gramophone which I had originally intended, but blended quite comfortably into the wide array of whacky and adventurous designs of all shapes and sizes. A larger than life-size model of Roots Manuva, a mammoth gramophone carried by four people and a guitar-clad Owl and the Pussy cat are just a few examples of the creative variety. Nonetheless artistic ability was not the main focus; participation on any scale counted.

The procession gradually took to the streets in a vibrant stream of jubilation, led by a pair of bearded boys donning Austin Power suits and stilts, dancing to the party vibes drumming from the sequin-studded classic samba band. Sharrow Vale became a street-party filtering festivity through the entire neighbourhood. The musical feast continued as the procession reached the candle-paved cemetery, giving host to the eccentric groove of jazz-funk band The Flamingo Love Parade, whose dissonant beats were enhanced by the dimly flamingo lantern lit tent.

Tying the evening up in the Cremorne with a soulful dosing of ambient funky-blues, The Lazy Tree Surgeons defined the evening as a triumphant blend of communal spirit and musical soul. Yet another successful fundraiser - Peace in the Park is looking to be one hell of a party.





IT COULD BE SAID THAT A NEW ERA HAS BEGUN FOR INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS. BUT THE VERY SAME HAS IN FACT ALREADY BEEN SAID COUNTLESS TIMES THROUGH THE YEARS AND PRECISELY ABOUT THE CENTRAL THEME OF THIS MONTH’S FILMREEL.

THE GRADUAL INTRODUCTION AND RAPID PROLIFERATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY INTO THE FILMMAKING PRACTICE HAS ENABLED, LIBERATED AND SOMEWHAT LEGITIMISED THOSE WORKING OUTSIDE THE CONSTRAINTS OF MAINSTREAM CINEMA. BUT NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WE ARE TAKING THOSE INFANT STEPS WITH MORE CONFIDENCE TOWARDS A NEW REALM OF POSSIBILITIES.

Instead of speaking from my own professional experience – with no obligation to promote anything or educate anyone in particular – I would like to bring to the attention of those interested in the subject the book ‘Digital Film-Making’ by the renowned British auteur Mike Figgis.

Pocket-size, like most great things, this is a step-by-step compendium of what it is to have this technology so readily available, how to best employ it and the ethics that should come along with it.

Figgis writes in the most accessible, down-to-earth tone with the same humour that I had the privilege to witness first-hand upon his presentation of his 2001 film Hotel in Bradford.

As a film which involves so much exploration of so many aspects of digital filmmaking, Hotel features prominently in the book. After all, even innovative customisation of equipment went into the making of the film, but prior to that, experimentation within the digital format had already taken place in the shape of Timecode (2000). This was a film that pushed technical and creative boundaries by having four cameras running in real time, in one continuous take and not a single edit – all presented simultaneously on a screen split in four.

The most important reference to Timecode made by the book has to be the way Figgis continued in subsequent years to attend special screenings in which he did live sound mixes for it – effectively drawing our attention from one screen to the next. A remarkable device of keeping your work alive and a sign of the same impressive openness that comprises the entirety of this book.

Every time there’s a mention of his Hollywood mainstream works – Internal Affairs (1990), Leaving Las Vegas (1995) or One Night Stand (1997) – it comes more in the shape of a cautionary tale.

As such, Figgis is never at any point afraid of expressing his anxieties or to expose his shortcomings. His films have become more and more personal, intertwined in every sense with his musical expression (he’s an accomplished jazz musician) and his roots in experimental ensemble theatre.

‘Digital Film-Making’ essentially sets out to empower those who by necessity or default utilise the digital format to express themselves artistically. Yet, it doesn’t fall short of criticism for the fact that this very same technology has enabled a lot of mediocre wannabes to put out derivative, unimaginative work and get away with a lot along the way.

What the book doesn’t fully address is my original point and preoccupation as an independent filmmaker. We’re in the realm of possibilities, which open themselves with every film that is independently made with commitment and genuine artistic ambition, but are truncated by an out-of-date distribution set-up.

Autonomous film production of the digital kind has established itself, but somewhere between this and the undeniable future of film exhibition, there is still a gap to be properly bridged.

At the root of how difficult it continues to be for an independently produced film to be widely seen in cinemas is the role of distribution companies. Their function is becoming progressively redundant, but they remain a key part in the mechanism through which big studios fuel the multiplexes across the globe.

With the advent of digital projection, which the majority of cinemas are now equipped with, there’s absolutely no reason for the distributors not to be altogether bypassed in the process, particularly when it comes to those venues of a specific type of identity and reputation.

A proper channel for dialogue between independent filmmakers who truly achieve a singularity of vision and the creative management of cinemas should be opened once and for all.

The intention is probably there, but it’s just a matter of one of the sides being prepared to do things differently...



‘Digital Film-Making’ by Mike Figgis is available from Faber and Faber at £8.99.

JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES IS A PORTUGUESE FILMMAKER LIVING AND WORKING INDEPENDENTLY IN SHEFFIELD. HIS WORKS INCLUDE ANTLERS OF REASON AND AN ARRAY OF MUSIC VIDEOS AND DOCUMENTARIES: CAPTURAFILMES.BLOGSPOT.COM

FOUR LIONS (2010).

DIRECTOR - CHRIS MORRIS.

REVIEWER - OWEN COGAN.

Chris Morris has made a film. It’s about Islamic extremists, it’s set and shot in Sheffield and it’s really funny.

The first feature film from the creator of The Day Today, Brass Eye and Nathan Barley is a hilarious exercise in humanising terrorists. Morris states in the film’s press release that the idea for the piece came to him whilst reading an account of an attempt to ram a US warship. The terrorists arrived at the harbour and filled their boat with explosives. It then sank. He talks of how he began to see the farcical side of extremism.

The humour is nearly always ridiculous, and although hilarious, at times lacks the sharpness and dark intelligence which colour most of Morris’s other work. I get the impression that this is not the result of an attempt to pander to a wider audience, but rather a change in intention. His earlier work is more often than not an attempt at presenting a comically twisted perspective on the familiar and mundane; an attempt at satirising our day to day social conventions by making them appear absurd and depraved. Four Lions is, conversely, a project in familiarising the unfamiliar. Islamic terrorism is something that frightens us, something we have trouble understanding or comprehending. Four Lions shows us that Islamic terrorism is as feeble, confused and prone to idiocy as all human affairs. Morris isn’t really directly engaging with the ideology of Islamic jihad, but rather undermining the culture of fear that makes up our response to terrorism.

The film is hilarious because it renders silly something we all take very seriously, allowing us to sit together and laugh at our collective neurosis. In this way it is not at all profound or nearly as intelligent, insightful or even politically engaged as most of Morris’s other work. It is, however, genuinely funny and at the same time absorbing on a human level.

The terrorists are loveable. Their warmth for each other is moving and their banter is brilliant. Morris’s portrayal of a terrorist cell as a bunch of incompetent but friendly, loving blokes from Yorkshire is funny because it undermines both the maniacal religious discourse of the terrorist and the equally ridiculous paranoid rhetoric of Western governments.

Four Lions doesn’t take terrorism seriously - it doesn’t have to because it’s a piece of entertainment. However, in taking such a stance Morris is able to make the serious, funny and reassuring point that Islamic terrorists are groups of guys who are misguided, confused and dangerous, but who love each other. The characters are not acting out of unbridled hatred but out of a confused sense of what is good. If Morris’s film has a political point it is that the interaction between overblown dogmatic ideology and the chaos of reality can lead to hilarity, that the distance between ideological interpretations of existence and the farcical facts of everyday life is funny.

Four Lions is on at the Showroom from May 7th.



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HEARTBREAK PRODUCTIONS HAVE BEEN BRINGING US OPEN AIR THEATRE AT THE BOTANICAL GARDENS FOR MANY YEARS NOW AND THEY ARE BACK THIS YEAR FRESH WITH A NEW SELECTION OF SHOWS FOR 2010.

Renowned for their exciting and innovative productions, Heartbreak aim to deliver the heart and soul of the original work in an updated mould, refreshed for today's outdoor audiences. Each time they create a unique format that delivers a blend of inventive passionate acting, live music and dance, alongside a great sense of humour and plenty of audience interaction.

This year Heartbreak will be touring three different plays - The Secret Garden, An Ideal Husband and Love in Shakespeare, all of which are available for your viewing pleasure at the Botanical Gardens between June and August. Be warned though, these events often sell out quickly so get your tickets as soon as you've packed your picnic and decided on the play you fancy most.

An Ideal Husband - 24 - 27th June - Oscar Wilde.

Director: Peter Mimmack.

"Ideal" is? Successful? Wealthy? The love of a good woman? He had it all. But sooner or later we are reminded that all our actions have consequences - even those we had long since forgotten about...

Love in Shakespeare - 9 - 11th July - William Shakespeare.

Hopeless romantic or love lorn cynic? Love in Shakespeare delves into a selection of the writer's well known plays and celebrates the lessons we learn as love is sought, found and sometimes lost.

The Secret Garden - 10-13th August - Frances Hodgson-Burnett.

Adaptation: David Kerby-Kendall.

Finding the key to a secret garden, locked and hidden for ten years, changes everything for the "family" and their lives blossom as mother nature works her magic.

PORTLAND WORKS. RANDALL ST, SHARROW. PORTLANDWORKS.CO.UK

NOW THEN... WE'VE BEEN ON ABOUT THIS PLACE FOR A FEW MONTHS AND WE THINK IT'S WORTH ANOTHER SPOUT SO LISTEN UP. PORTLAND WORKS IS ON THE CORNER OF HILL ST AND RANDELL ST IN SHARROW. IT WAS THE FIRST FORGE IN SHEFFIELD TO CREATE STAINLESS STEEL IN 1913 AND IT IS A GRADE II LISTED BUILDING.

Portland Works was built in the 1870s and is now one of the last remnants of that industrious age of makers, steam power and invention. Sheffield was the backbone to the body production of that era, with workshops like Portland Works acting as vertebrae to that spine. Traditionally called Mesters, these small workshops housed highly skilled, independent craftsmen who were the mainstay of the cutlery and tool making capital that was Sheffield.

Portland Works in the year 2010 still plays host to a knifemaker, a tool forger, a silver plater, an engraver, a die maker, several different visual artists, rehearsal rooms for musicians and storage space and hangouts for promoters, soundsystems and creative types. It houses folk like Trevor Ablett, who makes traditional folding knives, and Mike Turnock, who might possibly be the last man in Britain still producing handmade wooden sieves and riddles. So this is all great and as it should be, because it's self sustaining, it's independent and it's community driven.

However, there is a BUT and a big one at that. Sheffield City Council is currently considering a planning application to turn Portland Works into 66 studio flats. The bane that is two-bedroom luxury apartments seems to be revisiting us once more. We're told that the design and all that is fairly sympathetic to the buildings architectural heritage. We're told that this might be OK. We'll probably be told that loads of people are looking for a studio flat in the industrial area of Sharrow. But you've got to be fucking kidding or stupid to believe that, haven't you?

It would be great to get the support of more members of the public. Naturally there is a petition on the website. Naturally there is a way of getting involved and protecting one of Sheffield's oldest maker based communities. Please do.

Following the campaign: portlandworks.co.uk.

Lodge a complaint with the council: <http://bit.ly/cRnWni>.

LOVE YOUR HAIR. 33 LONDON ROAD. LOVEYOURHAIR.CO.UK / 0114 276 3333.

This place is a long standing favourite and has recently been sandwiched between two major corporate food dispensaries on London Road (grrrrr). The irony is not lost on owner and head stylist James Worrall, who understands the true importance of independence and freedom in his work.

James and his team are not in the business of imposing any particular style from the flavour of the month training manual, which is what you'll likely find with the high street chains, who attend regular training to ensure that they are cutting the same styles to the millimeter, up and down the country. Instead, you'll receive the ultimately personal service, with the consultation and planning lasting as long as you need until you're confident that you're both on the same page before the first strands hit the floor. Step off the conveyor belt and love your hair.

EXPOSE FESTIVAL. THE RIVERSIDE BAR, 1 MOWBRAY ST. POINTBLANK.ORG / RIVERSIDESHEFFIELD.CO.UK

A new festival for artists across all disciplines, from film, theatre and the visual arts to spoken word and music has arrived. Expose Festival at the Riverside Bar runs from 31st May till 9th June and aims to provide a platform for both new and established artists to take risks and formulate fresh approaches to their work within a new venue.

The festival begins with a BBQ thrown in particular for artists or emerging talent, offering folk the opportunity to talk about their creations and network with some of Sheffield's most prolific and popular creatives. Throughout the festival there will be exhibitions from the likes of Pixelwitch, who will be displaying her work from the Latrino Gals collection, as well as emerging local visual artist Sarah Abbott, who will be curating an exhibition of artists from around the world, some as far off as Canada.

If you're looking to find out more or submit your work please visit the websites above or contact amy@pointblank.org.uk.

TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ARTS EXHIBITION. 12TH - 15TH MAY. ASKSHEFFIELD.ORG

Temporary Autonomous Arts is all about giving a platform to creative works outside commercial pressures and the corporate world. Put simply, it is a four-day open access art space that aims to break down the barriers between artist and audience. Visitors are encouraged to bring and exhibit their own art, including (but not restricted to) painting, film, music, photography, performance, fashion and sculpture. You can get involved in the overall organisation or just turn up on the day and peddle your wares.

If you want to find out more, visit the website or contact artandsoulcollective@hotmail.com.

P.I.T.P. FUNDRAISER. SUNDAY BANK HOLIDAY SPECIAL. 30TH MAY @ CORPORATION. £6 ADV / £8 OTD

Yes, we are banging on about Sheffield's best festival again. Yes there is another fundraiser and yes it's worth your cotton socks to attend.

Peace in the Park is on the 12th of June this year at Ponderosa park. You'll find great music, community stalls and food and drink aplenty. Each year there are events city wide to raise money for this festival, the proceeds of which go to a different local and international charity.

A gigantic mini-festival fundraiser at Corporation featuring live music and DJs across three rooms is on the upcoming bank holiday weekend. Sly selections from Rogue State, Dubcentral, Swank n Jams, Sama Roots, Tinnitus, Frozac, Planet Terror and many more, alongside performances from the likes of Mojo and the Beatniks, Mantra Rhythms, Balkan Bandits and the Chosen Family. This is a big line-up and a steal at £6. Visit wegottickets.com or search on Facebook.

THE CHIMNEY HOUSE. 4 KELHAM ISLAND. THECHIMNEYHOUSE.COM / 0114 276 7885.

Local PR guru Sally Clark has been working solidly for months with her team of designers, builders and architects to realise her dream; The Chimney House of Kelham Island. A little over a month ago, the doors were finally opened to all budding creatives and the response has already been staggering.

The Chimney House is a meeting room with a difference - too many to mention in fact. The décor is exquisitely tasteful, marrying the age and history of this incredible building with dynamic and modern wall papering and mural painting by local artists. Kicking off things with former Now Then featured artist Tom J Newell, depicting previous inhabitant Sarah the elephant, who was used as a forklift during the building's working past. There's even a horn to honk should you need anything. It's an environment perfectly conducive to creativity, with more than a little character. Check the website for details and availability.

THE SHOWROOM. PATERNOSTER ROW, SHEFFIELD. SHOWROOMWORKSTATION.ORG.UK

The independent vestige of Sheffield that is the Showroom Cinema has come up trumps again. Located down on Paternoster Row, the Showroom has provided a deal to inspire even the thriftiest among us. We recommend you give it a shot.

The Take Two offer combines two tickets to a film of your choice with an array of authentic Spanish dishes and a bottle of house wine all for the frankly stunning price of £25.00 for two people. You can grab vouchers from the box office and the deal is available from Monday to Saturday, 12noon to 9pm. Perfect for the blind date, the 'we're just friends who like spending time together', or the happily married and indifferent.

We'd recommend Chris Morris's debut Four Lions for May, a perfect excuse for grub and a giggle.





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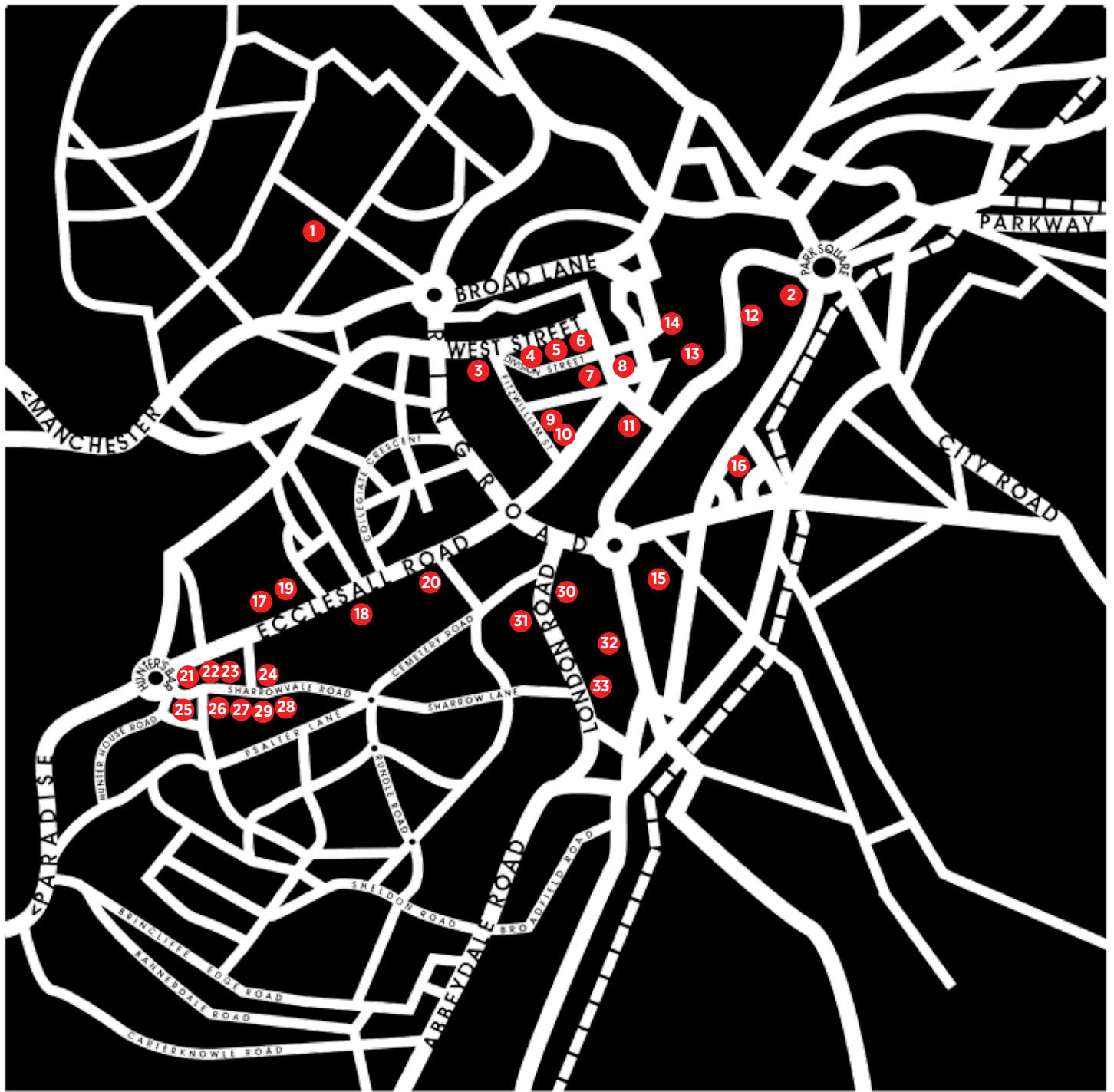
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